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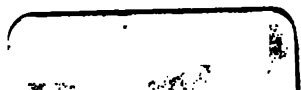
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KATE DEVEREUX.

A STORY OF MODERN LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE character of Bettina Jones, in the following pages, has been drawn from real life ; the Author lived with this singular personage for many years, enjoying, with others, her drollery and eccentricities.

LONDON,

April 12, 1851.

KATE DEVEREUX.

CHAPTER I.

“The bold to break
Heaven’s law supreme, and desperately rush
Thro’ sacred nature’s murder, on their own,
Because they never think of death, they die.”
Young’s Night Thoughts.

“Is there really nothing to eat in the house?” said Reginald, a fine boy of eleven years, to his sister Kate, a well grown girl, two years older. “Is the bread all done?”

“I am afraid it is,” she replied; “and I do not know what we are to do! Poor mamma is so weak, that she cannot come down

stairs. She has been crying all the morning, and baby is so peevish and fretful that it is sad to listen to her! I wish I could get something nice for mamma, she is so much in want of nourishing food."

"Oh! that I were a big and strong man to work for you all!" exclaimed Reginald; "I do believe that it is want of food that makes mamma so ill!"

"No doubt of it," said Kate. "Now that dear, kind grandpapa is gone, there are no more presents to stock our larder; and I am sure that if mamma had had meat sufficient, during the last month, she would have been well by this time, for baby is six weeks old to-day."

"Papa does not like baby," whispered Reginald, looking inquiringly in his sister's face. "There are so many mouths to feed! How I wish that I could help to maintain you!"

"You can do something now," said Kate; "take your fishing-rod, and try to catch a few trout for poor mamma, and as you pass near the old farm, ask for a little milk,—you

can offer some of your fish in exchange, if they are so hard-hearted as to take them."

"But they are our own relations, Kate! I can tell who I am, and they will be glad to serve us."

"You had better say nothing about it," rejoined Kate; "Papa does not seem to like them, and I fear I am doing very wrong in sending you there."

"What stuff!" cried Reginald, "Farmer Baron will be glad to do anything for us. Thomas, the old ploughman, told me that when Farmer Baron was young, he worshipped the very ground that mamma trode upon. I had better ask to see him, and tell him the true state of the case at once."

"You must do no such thing," said Kate, looking grave; "now that I think of it, you had better go at once to old Thomas, who I know has a cow of his own, and beg a little milk for mamma,—be sure to tell him that I shall send afterwards to pay him."

Kate now busied herself about her household duties, every now and then running up stairs to pay her mother a visit. Her father,

Mr. Devereux, had been out since morning ; her sister, next to Reginald, little Marian, was attending the sick woman, and watching the baby ; while the other children, for unfortunately there were seven in all, were playing in the neighbourhood of the house.

" Kate, come near me, I want to speak to you," murmured the invalid. " We shall all have to work hard now, Kate, since your poor grandfather is gone."

" Yes, mamma, I know we must ; but why is papa so proud ? Though it is necessary to work, he does not like to see us to do so."

" Your father finds it difficult to accommodate his notions to his circumstances," replied her mother with a sigh, " you know he is of a very good family, and lived in a style of which you can form no idea, before he quarrelled with his relations, and married me !"

" If his relations were offended at his marrying you," said Kate, " I am quite content to have nothing to do with them, for they must be very proud and disagreeable people !"

" They had quarrelled with your father before he ever saw me, so I am glad to think

that I am not the only cause of their estrangement. But you know, my dear, that my relations have always been plain, simple people, so it does seem odd that your father happened to choose me."

"I know the reason very well!" exclaimed Kate, throwing her arms round her mother's neck, "because he saw you were good and handsome!"

The baby now began to cry, and Kate turned towards the cradle to assist her sister Marian, when the door flew open, and one of the younger children rushed in, crying bitterly; Kate attempted to pacify him, but in vain, "I am very hungry," he cried, "and I know there is no bread in the house! Reginald was coming across the field just now with such beautiful fish in his basket, a jug of milk in one hand, and a nice pasty in the other! When papa heard that he had brought them from Baron's farm, he dashed the jug to pieces, threw the fish and pasty into the river, and knocked poor Reginald down! His forehead is all cut and we are as hungry as hungry can be, and papa is so angry!"

"God pity us!" cried the poor woman, as sobbing violently she buried her head in the bed-clothes; Kate dragged away the screaming boy, and ran to console poor Reginald. It was too true, all was as described, but her brother was more mortified than hurt.

"It is too bad Kate," he exclaimed, "to be knocked down for doing my duty! I gave the message you desired to old Thomas, when just as I was speaking, farmer Brown came up and when Thomas repeated what I said, his face got like scarlet. Then he whispered something to the old man, and walked away, so that I saw no more of him. Thomas went into the house, and came back with the milk, and such a monstrous pasty! However, it is all gone, thanks to papa! And I had just been thinking what a hearty meal we should make this evening!—Kate, I won't stand it, I am going to run away!"

And now let us turn to Mr. Devereux who, poor man, was more to be pitied than blamed. He had locked himself into his apartment, and was now pacing up and down in moody disquietude. Though not naturally an ill-

tempered man, disappointment and neglect had soured his better nature, and he was in consequence more feared than loved by his children. He had been alone about half an hour, when some one timidly knocked at the door of his apartment, and Kate's voice was heard requesting to speak with him. He opened the door, and looked at her in silence.

"Mamma is very poorly," she said, "I think we ought to send for the doctor; and if you could let me have a shilling or two, the person who goes for him might buy bread for the children, as we have none in the house."

Mr. Devereux put his hand in his pocket and drew out his purse; there was one large coin within it, and only one. It was a five-shilling piece.

"This is all that stands between us and beggary, Kate," said he, more kindly than usual; "take it, and make the best of it! Your poor mother and seven children to feed! God help me! It is enough to turn a man's brain!"

Kate looked at him astonished, for it was not often that he spoke so frankly.

“Go!” he continued, “why do you stare at me? Did you never see a penniless man before? One who has given being to seven helpless creatures and cannot feed them! A broken down gentleman! A pauper! too genteel, forsooth, to receive parish relief! ha! ha! ha!”

Poor Kate in sad amazement was taken by the shoulders, and thrust out of the room. Now it happened that Mr. Devereux had a few days before applied for a respectable situation with a small salary, which was then vacant in an adjoining country town. He had little hope of receiving a favourable reply, but it was the only chance he seemed to possess of bettering his circumstances. The postman’s knock was heard at this moment, so he opened the window and looked out.

“Two letters for Mr. Devereux,” said the postman, “come to eighteen-pence.”

Kate ran forward to pay them. “Stop!” said her father, “I shall only take the one with the Edmonstone postmark; pay nine-pence, Kate.”

Kate obeyed; the postman looked sur-

prised, he was an old man; and quite an original, who having traversed the country for the last thirty years in his present occupation, felt himself privileged to take an interest in his "customers," as he called them.

"I say, Miss," he whispered to Kate, "my mind misgives me, that there is something good in that 'ere epistle which Mr. Devereux goes for to despise! It is just as well you should open it, as that it should habituate the dead letter box! I'll stand the extra pence myself, and Master Reginald shall catch me a dish of fish for my Missus, next time I go round this quarter!"

Kate's brow flushed; "Thank you very much," said she; "but I fear Papa would not like it! Indeed, I dare not take it!"

"Fiddle faddle, and nonsense!" cried the post-man; "I am an old man, Miss, and all the world knows me for a concentric character, that does whatever he has a mind to!" And with that the good-hearted old fellow tossed the letter in through the only open window that was within his reach, and scampered off on his old white pony. Kate

trembled, for it was her father's room that the audacious postman had thus profaned.

Mr. Devereux opened the Edmonstone letter alone in his own apartment, and his hand shook as he did so. It was a civil refusal which he might have anticipated ; but he now became aware, by the oppressive dejection which overpowered him, how insensibly he had hoped against hope. All now was over, the earth seemed barren, the heavens were as brass ; to whom could he turn for aid ! He had looked his difficulties in the face, he had revolved over and over again some means of escape—he had written to his friends, he had applied for employment, but all in vain. One of the younger children at this moment began to cry ; and the sound went to his heart.

“The poor little wretch is hungry,” he exclaimed. “And am I to hear such sounds day after day, and be unable to alleviate my children's distress ! Am I to see my wife sink slowly and by inches, into the grave ? Or shall I apply for parish relief ? I—a Devereux !—How well it will sound

when the parish officer mentions to the board of guardians that Reginald Devereux is a claimant for relief. Reginald Devereux a pauper with seven children! Very pretty, very high sounding! And that fellow Baron will hear it. He expects as much already, and how he will chuckle to think, that the man who carried off his pretty cousin is humbled. Well, let it be; I am callous; I shall never live to see it!"

The wretched man took up a pistol which was lying before him, "Marian! My dear children!" he exclaimed, "I am not a coward, but I cannot bear to see your misery. Oh, merciful God, have compassion on my soul!"

He had the pistol to his forehead, and was pulling the trigger, when something thrown in at the window touched him—it made him start and give the pistol a jerk!—It went off, but he escaped unhurt, for the bullet entered the wall behind him.

The frantic man became sobered; he recognized the hand of Providence, and tears of shame and penitence trickled down his cheeks.

He heard the infant's cry once more. No longer estranged from it, the wail of the little innocent being struck a chord in the father's heart, and sinking on his knees, he exclaimed :—

“God willing, I shall yet be able to feed my children ! The All-seeing One who has so miraculously saved me from deadly sin, has not preserved my life in vain. Father of mercies, I trust in Thee ! Forgive a wretched sinner !”

Poor Devereux remained a long time on his knees, and when he rose up, he was a humbler and a better man. His eye was immediately caught by the letter which had been thrown into the room. He took it up and opened it. Judge of his gratitude to Almighty God, when he discovered that it contained a fifty pound note, with the information in a feigned hand, that the donor would continue to send the same half-yearly.

“Almighty God, I thank Thee ! I thank Thee, a thousand and a thousand times,” he ejaculated from the bottom of his heart. “Thou art indeed a Father, and a kind

Father. God be praised and blessed for ever more !”

After gazing at his newly-received treasure for some moments, he hastened to his wife’s apartments, to impart his joy to one ever ready to sympathize with him.

“Marian !” he exclaimed, “Joy ! joy for us all !”

But she did not reply, and he could not make her aware of his presence. She had heard his hurried footsteps,—the murmur of his soliloquy had reached her ears, strained to catch every sound,—and then the pistol-shot sounded in her over-excited state like the knell of her doom,—she could not speak,—she could not move,—her senses were paralyzed. It was as if some hideous night-mare were brooding on her chest, oppressing her,—overpowering her,—weighing her down. The walls seemed to go round, blackness came over her eyelids, her infant’s wail sounded fainter and fainter, all her senses closed, and she heard and saw no more.

“Marian ! Marian ! For God’s sake speak to me,” cried Devereux, almost frantic. “It

is I ! It is Devereux ! Your husband ! Your own dear husband, who speaks to you.—For mysake—your children's sake—rouse yourself ! There are happier days in store for us !”

Kate, who, though she also had heard the pistol shot, had put no sinister construction on the sound, now entered the apartment. Greatly shocked at her mother's appearance, as well as at the incoherent raving of her father, she rushed to the bed-side, and with ready skill, applying the proper remedies, at last succeeded in restoring the sufferer to consciousness. Slowly opening her eyes, she heaved a deep sigh, and as if responding to the expression, “There are happy days in store for us,” she murmured, “No, no ! all is gone ! all is lost ! Youth has fled ! Joy is past ! The night has begun !” Then looking wildly round, she exclaimed, “Where am I ? What has happened ? I dreamt Devereux was dead ! Oh ! that fearful dream ! It is real ! it is real ! I know it is real ! Where is he ? Show me him ! Let me go to him !” And sobbing violently, she tossed her arms and strove to rise.

It was some time before Devereux could calm her agitation, and convince her of his safety ; at last he succeeded in making her aware that not only was he alive, but that he had met with good fortune ; and there was no longer any fear of starvation for the family. The poor lady, overpowered with the fatigue of her contending emotions, and weak as a child, in a tumult of confusion, joy, and thankfulness, sobbed herself to sleep in his arms.

Reginald Devereux was a man of broken fortunes and soured expectations. Of ancient and wealthy family, he had irretrievably offended his relatives by his extravagance and waywardness, so that even his portion as a younger son was denied him, all but a scanty annuity of fifty pounds a-year. He had filled up the measure of his delinquences by marrying the late farmer Baron's daughter, in reality a very superior person, although his friends would give her no credit for being so. Her ancestors had farmed the same land for several centuries, and always borne a high character ; she herself was well educated and amiable.

Her only brother, a wild young man, had run off to sea several years before, and not been heard of since, so her father had adopted in his place a nephew of his own, the present farmer Baron, to whom his daughter had been supposed to be engaged at the time Mr. Devereux persuaded her to elope with him.

The slighted lover consoled himself by marrying also shortly after, and one son was the fruit of the ill-assorted union.

The house in which the Devereux family resided, was an ancient manor-house that had known better days. Many of the rooms were so dilapidated as to be uninhabitable ; but the lower part of the house was still sufficiently comfortable. The garden was extensive, but out of order, and land sufficient to keep a cow, comprised the rest of their domain. The children were very happy, whatever their parents might be, for they were constantly in the open air, and had no care. Their chief instructor was their father, who taught the boys Latin and drawing, and made them all good vocal musicians. Indeed, the latter was the only accomplishment in which the girls

had time to take part, for after having learned the more plain branches of education, they had to assist their mother in household work.

Kate sometimes got into a scrape from her love of reading; she would borrow books from most of the respectable inhabitants of the parish, and deprive herself of sleep in order to read them, getting up by the gray dusk in summer mornings, and in winter causing an unwarrantable consumption of candles; for which she was scolded, if the gentlest of all possible reprimands could be so termed, by her mother. Kate was not pretty, but she was a striking and fine-looking girl, with a countenance such as would often win more admiration than falls to the lot of mere prettiness. She was tall and slight, with dark hair and eyes, and long, very dark eyelashes. Her features were regular, and her expression open, sweet, and very animated. When excited, she had a beautiful colour, but was pale at other times. The next boy, Reginald, was the counterpart of Kate in everything, though his temper was perhaps less disciplined; he was her chosen friend and constant com-

panion. Bernard, the third, was full of fun, and as happy as happy could be all the day long. After him came the fair-haired, gentle Marian, very like her mother, in sweetness of disposition, and sensible beyond her years. We must not forget Sidney, a curly-headed, spoiled urchin ; and least of all, dear little Annie, the pet and plaything of the whole house, whom Kate looked upon as her especial property, now that her mother's time was occupied with the baby. Annie was what the French would have termed "*un enfant de bénédiction*;" so good and gentle, so sweet-tempered and happy ! As an infant, she had scarcely ever cried ; in the cradle she used to wake smiling instead of weeping, and her little, merry laugh resounded so often and so blithely, that attending on her was a pastime instead of a trouble. Such she continued to be till she was seven years old, and Kate fifteen, exactly two years from the commencement of our story—the joy of the whole house, and the darling of every one's heart.

It was the evening before little Annie's seventh birth-day ; she had got upon her

father's knee, and he had playfully asked her what he should do for her on the morrow.

"I shall be seven years old to-morrow," said she, musing. "I shall soon be a woman now, so I wish to see a big town."

This announcement was greeted with a burst of laughter from the rest of the children.

"Would you not rather have a picture-book?" replied her father, "or ask some of the farmers' children to tea, and have a nice game of blind-man's buff?"

"I might have all three," said little Annie, looking archly up in her father's face. "Kate is going to Edmonstone to-morrow to buy such a number of things, and I might go with her, and get my picture-book, and we could be home in time to tea, and the game of blind-man's buff. Do let me go,—I want to see a town before I die; and to-morrow I shall be seven years old!"

"What do you think a town is like?" asked Kate.

"Oh, Sidney has told me already that it is a great many houses in one place, like a number of farm-yards without the stacks,

and with very few cows walking about, and more things to sell in one shop, than old Ralph, the packman, has had in his pack for a year and a day. Oh, I wish I could see a town before I die!"

"Why do you say 'before I die?'" asked Mrs. Devereux.

"Because I am getting old now," said little Anne with a very grave face; "I shall be seven years old to-morrow, almost a woman, and I do not know how long I may live. Oh, I wish I might go to Edmonstone!"

It was accordingly arranged that little Annie should accompany Kate in the morning to the market town, three miles off; they were to get a ride there in farmer Bradford's spring cart, and as he generally remained till late in the day, they were afterwards to set out before him, and walk home by themselves. Mr. Devereux or Reginald would come to meet them, to carry little Annie in case she was tired, and the young Bradfords were to be asked to tea.

The birth-day morning dawned bright and beautiful. Annie was awake before daylight

and begged hard that Kate would dress her. "I want to be very neat to-day," she said to her sister, "and I wish to be dressed all in white."

"What! won't you put on the pretty blue sash that farmer Bradford sent you for your birth-day?" asked Kate.

"No," replied Annie, "I wish to be all in white, for who knows how soon I may die! It will be time enough to put on the blue sash if we come home to tea."

"What stuff is my little girl talking?" said Kate, "and what makes her speak of how soon she may die? Little Annie ought not to speak so often and so lightly about dying! Death is a very awful thing, and she is too young to think or talk about it."

The whole family breakfasted earlier than usual, in order that the young people might not keep Farmer Bradford waiting. It was remarked by all, that there was an extraordinary excitement about little Annie, not the mere result of her glee at the prospect of seeing Edmonstone for the first time. Her eyes sparkled and her cheeks were flushed, but

instead of running about as usual, scampering like a little mad thing, and making the house resound with her merry peals of laughter, she sat quietly in her little chair, with her hand clasped in her mother's, and spoke so strangely and yet so wisely, that involuntarily the parents looked at each other in surprise.

"Annie has been changed by the fairies last night," exclaimed Reginald, "we don't know what to make of her!"

"Indeed I am not a fairy at all, Reginald," replied Annie; "I am nothing but myself as yet, though I should not mind at all being changed, if I could become a little angel and live beside God!"

The children were hushed, and looked at the little girl in surprise. At eight o'clock Farmer Bradford drove up, and the two sisters jumped into the spring-cart. Kate had on a white gown, and a coarse straw bonnet neatly tied under her chin with a narrow blue ribbon; a plain handkerchief of the same colour covered her neck, and she looked neat and modest; but the old fashioned style of her dress, and its extreme plainness,

showed she was poor. Little Annie had on her white frock and tippet; her sunny curls were covered by a drawn white muslin bonnet, which Kate had made for her birthday. After nearly an hour's drive, for the spring-cart went but slowly, owing to the unevenness of the roads, they arrived at Edmonstone. Annie was surprised and delighted with everything she saw, and Kate had some difficulty in getting her along, so eager was the child to stop at every gay shop and examine the contents of the windows. She soon became as happy as a queen, and lost the strange gravity that the family had observed in the morning. About two o'clock they left the town, but they had not gone a quarter of a mile when they saw a herd of bullocks approaching, some of which were very wild, and frightened the child nearly out of her wits, and indeed Kate grew pale also, as she placed her next the wall. Their alarm was soon dispelled, for a very young man who had left Edmonstone a short time after them, came up just at the moment, and having a stout stick in his hand, protected them till all the unruly beasts had gone by.

He appeared about seventeen or eighteen, but his honest face, with its clear, ruddy complexion, would have made him out even younger, had not his tall figure and broad shoulders given him the appearance of a man.

"That is young John Baron," whispered little Annie to Kate; "Papa forbade any of us to speak to him; what shall we do?"

This was certainly true; for the young man in question had, one day, made acquaintance with Annie and her brothers as they were walking together; the young people were delighted with each other, but when Bernard and Sidney, on their return home, related their rencounter, Mr. Devereux was very angry, and sternly forbade them to hold communication with any member of that family. All this Kate knew, so she was both surprised and sorry to hear the name of the young stranger who had befriended them, and who now seemed disposed to join their company. He made some remarks to Kate in such a pleasant, cheerful tone of voice, that she was very sorry to answer him exceedingly shortly and coldly.

John Baron had just come home from an excellent commercial school, where he had been for several years, so this accounted for Kate not knowing him at first. He seemed to fancy that she was distant in her manner, because she did not recognize him, so presently he told his name, adding that, as they were cousins, he hoped they would henceforth be good friends. Kate's brow flushed scarlet,—she thought of her father and began to tremble; at last she said,—

“ I am very sorry, sir, to appear rude, after you have been so kind, but, indeed, papa does not like us to talk to strangers, and,—and,”—

“ That is enough, cousin,” interrupted John Baron, his honest face flushing till it was as rosy as poor Kate's; “ I shall not trouble you any longer,” and so saying he strode away.

“ What a pity!” said Kate, when he was nearly out of sight; “ such a good creature as he seems to be!”

“ Yes,” said little Annie, who was like to cry; “ and to think of it being my birthday too!”

The sky now began to grow overcast, and they had still to walk a mile before coming to the place where their father and Reginald were to meet them. Poor Annie grew very tired, and large drops of rain began to fall. The roads became dirty, and here and there the mud rendered them quite slippery. At last Annie began to cry, and said she could walk no further ; so Kate took her up in her arms, and tried to get on the best way she could with such a burden. She could not help thinking that if she had not offended John Baron he would still have been walking with them, and might have helped her. At last they came to where the road went down hill to a rustic bridge that crossed a rivulet which afterwards passed near their house. They were still about a mile and a half from home, but very near the place where they expected their friends ; though having left Edmonstone before the time appointed, Kate feared very much that they would have to proceed further, before meeting them. They had got a glimpse of John Baron, who was ascending the slope opposite ; he looked back

as they came in sight, and hesitated. Kate fancied that he wished to offer to help her, but did not like to do so after the rebuff she had given him. At any rate he began to walk slower, notwithstanding the storm, which raged very fiercely, so that they might perhaps come up to him. The brook, too, had begun to rise, and was so swollen that they could scarcely recognize it. When they had got about half way down the slope, Annie stopped her sister, and said,—

“I am not tired now, let me run down the hill, for the rain has washed the mire away.”

And so saying, the little darling escaped from Kate's arms, and running on before her, soon arrived at the foot of the declivity, and began to cross the narrow bridge, notwithstanding her sister's loud calls to her to stop. The rain at this moment seemed to abate, and the air was feeling lighter ; so, as if in unison with the rest, Annie's cheerfulness returned, and laughing gaily, she looked back at her sister, and shook her head.

That merry laugh, so sweet and gladsome to hear, ended in a shriek ; the dear child's

foot slipped on the wet planks of the bridge, and she fell with a heavy plunge into the water! In one moment Kate was down the slope, and after her; she succeeded in getting hold of her, but she too was carried off her feet by the swiftness of the current, which at this spot was very deep. Kate kept fast hold of Annie, and the two were carried down a few paces, till their progress was impeded by the branches of a fallen tree, against which they struck. John Baron, by this time, had come to the rescue, and succeeded in extricating them from their miserable plight. He was just in time, for Kate had got so entangled amongst the branches in her struggles, that she would soon have been choked by the water. Taking little Annie from her grasp, he laid her gently on the grass out of harm's way, and then assisted Kate to get up on the slippery bank. Kate's first thought was for her sister, and she rushed to her side; but the water was dropping so fast from her own hair, and she was so giddy from the contusion she had received in striking against the tree, that amidst the wind and rain, for the storm

had again risen, she could scarcely see. She kissed the little dear, however, as her cousin raised her in his arms, and murmuring, "Thank God ! Thank God !" suffered him to carry the child and lead herself onwards. There was a deserted cottage at the top of the acclivity, and thither John Baron conducted them, to rest for a few minutes. He found a seat for Kate, and sat down with little Annie on his lap beside her. "Let me see my darling," said Kate ; "Why does she not speak?"

And Annie certainly was very quiet ; poor child she was so cold and stiff, it was little wonder that her prattle had ceased ! "Annie my darling speak to me," said Kate, "why don't you answer, dearest ?—speak to your own Kate !"

Annie still was silent ; Kate snatched her up in her arms and rushed to the window ; pushing back the long sunny curls, now wet and dripping, she gazed in her face. The dear child was deadly pale, her little eyes were closed, and her fingers clenched ; she felt so strange, and lay so inanimate in Kate's arms, her face was so altered, and there was such a

black contusion on her forehead, that her sister shuddered. She strained her to her breast wildly, and pressed her lips to her mouth. There was no breath there.—Was the lovely child dead? And had dear little Annie got the wish she had expressed in the morning of her birthday? Had she really become a bright and beautiful angel, and was she now living with God?

These thoughts flashed with the rapidity of lightning through Kate's brain and maddened her! Her own, her beautiful little sister, who fair as a lily, and as spotless, had been confided that morning to her care, by her mother, —how was she to render back her charge to her, who was even now expecting to greet them!

"O Annie! Annie darling! Open your dear eyes, and speak to poor Kate! O, merciful God! how shall I take her home!" exclaimed the frantic girl.

"Perhaps," interposed John Baron, as the manly tear trickled down his cheek, "perhaps she is not dead! She may only be insensible from the violence of the blow. We can do

nothing to restore her here. Let me take her up in my arms, and run home with her!"

"Oh! yes!" exclaimed Kate, "anything! Oh! save my child! save my darling!"

John Baron needed no second admonition, but snatching up the child, and only taking time to lay her head tenderly on his shoulder, he rushed like a madman out of the old cottage, while Kate hastened after him towards the manor house. In the hurry he did not lose his presence of mind; for overtaking a farm servant, riding his horses from the plough, to seek shelter from the storm, he dispatched him to Edmonstone for a doctor.

At last they reached home, but missed Mr. Devereux and Reginald, from having taken a short cut across the fields. When the children saw Kate's frantic appearance, and the lifeless burden in John Baron's arms, they began to scream wildly. Their mother rushed down stairs, and becoming deadly pale at the sight, staggered back. She could not speak, but her imploring eyes demanded more eloquently than words an explanation of what had happened. Kate tried to make her

mother comprehend ; but her sobs rendered the narrative inarticulate. Baron, therefore, was obliged to interrupt her, and say,—

“The child fell into the water and struck her forehead against a tree ! I do not think she is drowned, but the blow has made her insensible ! If she could only be bled, there might be a chance for her ! The doctor is sent for, and will be here directly.”

Mrs. Devereux, as pale as ashes, with her lips compressed, snatched up the insensible form and gazed in little Annie’s face ; she kissed her, she brought her to the kitchen fire, she tore off her wet garments, and rubbed her limbs with her hands ; she called to her, she implored her to open her eyes and look at her mother ! But all in vain—the child heard not ; or the mother’s cry would have roused her from her stupor.

“She is not dead !” cried Mrs. Devereux. “I *know* she is not dead ! If she could only be bled !”

At these words the little, thoughtful Marian ran out of the room, and presently came back with an open penknife, which she offered her

mother. Mrs. Devereux looked at the knife and shuddered—then murmuring to herself —“Great God, assist me!” she cut the child’s finger. After doing so, she looked aghast, and nearly fainted. Kate supported her head, while John Baron watched the cut and pressed the lips of the wound to induce the blood to flow.

“It is not deep enough,” he whispered. “But after all, what is this?” and he stopped short.

The blood was indeed coming, and drop by drop it slowly trickled forth.

“Joy, joy!” he cried, in tones which re-animating the sinking woman.

The mother started forward, and gazed on her child, who was still on her lap. Could she believe her senses?—Little Annie had opened her eyes! It was a considerable time before she could speak, but the doctor arriving shortly after, further restoratives were applied, and she was soon nearly well. She was then put to bed with Kate beside her, for, notwithstanding her joy, the latter began to feel herself very poorly. Beyond all description were

the joy and transports of the children ; they jumped and danced, laughed and sung ; baby got up on John Baron's knee, and Sidney mounted on his back. Then John capered about the room and was a bigger boy than any of them, carrying them all by turns, and shouting and laughing with the best of them. In the midst of all this hubbub Mr. Devereux and Reginald returned. They had met the doctor on the outskirts of Edmonstone, who had stopped and spoken to them. He did not very well know the nature of the accident that had occurred ; but had said enough to frighten them extremely, and make them hasten home at their utmost speed, though of course the doctor's horse had far outstripped them. He now met them at the door, where they were pausing in astonishment at the extraordinary scene that was going on. The children no sooner observed them than the noise suddenly ceased, and leaving John Baron standing blushing in the centre of the room, they ran towards them, and vied with each other in telling the good news. It was some time before the doctor

could explain it all intelligibly to the anxious father, who, when the recital was finished, walked up to John Baron, and shaking him warmly by the hand, thanked him most gratefully for having been the means of preserving the lives of his children. Devereux then ran up stairs, and was about to rush into the room where his daughters were lying, but Mrs. Devereux, who had heard him enter with his son, and watched them from the landing-place, now stepped forward and interposed.

"Hush!" said she, putting her finger to her lips, "they are both well, and sleeping. God be praised!" she added, and throwing her arms round her husband's neck, she burst into tears. They were the first she had shed since Annie was brought home, but they were sweet and joyful tears, and relieved her throbbing heart.

"I must see the darlings," said Devereux, and softly opening the door, he stole in on tiptoe. Kate was sleeping very soundly, for she had been dreadfully fatigued with the exertion and excitement of the day; one arm was

passed under Annie's neck, and the other was thrown over her, as though to protect her. The little darling was lying on her back, with her hands clasped in the attitude of prayer, her sweet innocent face, with its sunny curls, was turned up towards heaven, and though the eyelids were closed, the lips moved, and a bright, happy smile flitted across the features.

"She is talking with the angels," whispered the mother, "hush ! let us not disturb her."

Weeks and months rolled on, and John Baron became a constant visitor at the Manor House, though his father's name was never mentioned on either side. His mother had been dead for some years, and he was the only child alive. A maternal relative had bequeathed him several thousand pounds, and as his father lived very plainly and frugally, it was thought he would also inherit something considerable in that quarter. He had hitherto received an excellent education, and his father was now hesitating whether to send him to college, or make him enter a mercantile house, as he shewed no taste for agriculture. Devereux had quite got over his dislike to

the young man, and his polished manners, and artistic pursuits insensibly exercised a great influence upon John, so that he became more gentlemanly, and his conversation gradually took a higher tone. He found nothing congenial in the companionship of the neighbouring farmers' sons, and in consequence spent all the hours he could steal from home at the Manor House. Kate often questioned her father with regard to his own relations, and eagerly devoured every particular which he was willing to communicate. There was a limit, however, which she dared not pass, and when she approached it, Devereux invariably changed the subject. She delighted to hear the gallant deeds of her more distant ancestors, which he seemed always willing to relate, and her eyes would sparkle, and her cheeks flush at the recital. Her appearance also changed about this time, her gait became more erect, her carriage more stately, her walk more independent, and unconsciously she assumed an air of superiority, almost of command, in her intercourse with her former companions. Her mother remarked this

change with alarm, and reproved her for it. Kate listened, and smiled, and kissed her mother, but did not amend. Mr. Devereux on the contrary, thought his daughter vastly improved, and often called his wife's attention to the aristocratic air which betokened so clearly the ancient blood that ran in her veins.

"She is fine-looking certainly," said her mother, "but a noble nature ought not to shew itself by haughtiness."

One afternoon, it might be about a year after Annie's accident, John Baron came earlier than usual, and Kate being the only person in the room when he entered, he asked her to put on her bonnet, and take a stroll with him. He was a great favourite of hers, and she seemed to regard him as a brother, since the memorable day when he had rescued her and her sister from a watery grave. Strange to say, although she had become changed to most persons, yet in his presence she had never looked proud, nor given herself airs. They strolled down the rivulet, conversing gaily, till at last they came to the

rustic bridge where Annie's foot had slipped. Here John proposed to rest, and the two sat down together.

"That was a very painful day," said he, as if continuing the subject which he was sure must be in Kate's thoughts as well as his own; "a most painful day, and yet to me a very happy one, because it made me acquainted with you, and rendered me intimate in your house all at once."

"Yes, John," said Kate, gravely, "it was a day never to be forgotten; but I cannot bear even now to look at the bridge, it makes me shudder. We had better move on, I think—is it not time to return?"

"Not yet," said her cousin; "let us leave this seat if you wish it, but let us go under those trees out of sight of the bridge. I wish very much to have a long chat with you, for I am going to leave home to-morrow."

"You!" cried Kate, in surprise; "I am very sorry to hear it," and the tears came into her eyes.

"Yes," said John Baron, "I am going to-morrow, to a merchant's office at Trieste, where

I shall probably remain a few years. My father has been writing about it for some time, but as it was not certain, I said nothing about it to any of you except to Mr. Devereux. We got the letter fixing it this morning, and so I came up early to see you and tell you about it."

Kate was silent, so her cousin proceeded :

"I brought you down to the old bridge, Kate, that you might think kindly of me the last evening I am to spend with you."

"Kindly of you, John!" interrupted Kate, "Yes, kindly, most kindly. I shall always remember you with gratitude. Did you not save Annie's life and mine?"

John Baron was silent, and he looked very strange.

"I wish," said he, "Kate, that you would give me a lock of your hair, I have already got Annie's, and I shall keep them both as a remembrance of you, and prize them dearly during the time I shall spend in foreign countries."

"Certainly," said Kate; and in the innocence of her heart, she drew the scissors from her pocket, and cut off a little bit of her

luxuriant dark hair. "I am very sorry, you are going, John," she continued, as she gave it to him; "you must not forget us, and we shall not forget you."

John hesitated; she was going to rise, but he stopped her, and took her hand. "I have something more to say," he continued. "You know, Kate, that when I come of age I shall have three hundred a-year, and by that time, too, my father's correspondent says, I may be earning a handsome salary."

"Then you will be quite rich," said Kate, gaily; "I wonder, when that time comes, if you will ever think of your poor cousins at the manor-house."

"Kate! Kate! how can you tease me so!" exclaimed John, forgetting himself, "You know so well that I adore you, Kate! my own dear Kate! Will you promise some day to become my wife? I have loved you from the first moment I saw you, and you have never been out of my thoughts, waking or sleeping, since!"

"Become your wife, John Baron!" exclaimed Kate, rising and drawing herself up to her

utmost height. "Your wife! the wife of John Baron, the farmer's son! the thing is too ridiculous! A Devereux to be again allied to a Baron! No, no, once in a century is enough."

Her cousin gazed upon her, transfixed in astonishment. To see her whom he had always regarded as so amiable and gentle betray such pride, really appalled him.

"Kate," he at last said, "I have paid you the greatest compliment which man can do to woman, and it merited at least a gracious refusal. I thank you, however, for the manner in which you have replied, since it has opened my eyes to your true character, and will help at a future day to alleviate my regret, and assist me perhaps to blot out the memory of this bitter moment. God bless you, Kate! You may, perhaps, never see me again; but I shall always think of you fondly, and pray that you may find a worthier object than John Baron upon whom to bestow your affections. God grant that whoever he may be, he may love you as well as I have done!"

He wrung her hand and departed. Kate had not been prepared for this sudden move-

ment, and looked after him in silence ; her colour went and came, and big tear-drops filled her eyes. At last, just as he was going out of sight, she called after him—

“ John, John, dear John ! come back ! ”

She was sure that he heard, but if so he did not answer ; so, mortified and ashamed, Kate returned homewards. The next morning early, John Baron started for Trieste. The Devereux family wondered much when they heard it, that he had not come to bid them farewell, while Kate blushed and looked very confused, but fortunately no one observed her. She wished to tell her father and mother what had passed, because she never had had any secrets from them, and could not bear the idea of concealment ; but her conscience prompted her to beware ; for she felt convinced that the recital of John Baron’s presumption would make her father exceedingly angry, and perhaps prevent him receiving him in a friendly manner at a future day. Whatever might be her present mortified feelings, she could not bear the idea of permanent estrangement from the preserver

of her own life and that of her little Annie. Then she thought of telling her mother only, but how was she to relate to that tender parent the words—"A Devereux to be allied again to a Baron! No, no, once in a century is enough!" She now felt sad and penitent for having made use of an expression which might be construed into an insult to the dear mother whom she loved so much.

CHAPTER II.

Where are they, the Belov'd,
The Gladsome, all ?
Where are they, the Belov'd,,
The Gladsome, all ?
They left the festal hearth and hall,
They pine afar from us in alien climes ;
Oh, who shall bring them back to us once more ?

German Anthology, by CLARENCE MANGON.

WE shall now pass over another year, which made a sad change in the Devereux family, for their father died. Fortunately the decease occurred a few weeks after Mr. Devereux had received the payment of both annuities, so that for some time afterwards their worldly circumstances continued the same as formerly.

It might be about four or five months after this melancholy event, when the first transports of sorrow had subsided, that Mrs. Devereux sent two of the younger boys to buy some necessaries at a small village, about a mile from the manor house, and situated on the highway between Edmonstone and the next post town. On arriving there, they were surprised to see a handsome travelling carriage with four horses, standing at the door of the rustic inn; footmen in splendid and very showy livery, were loitering about, and at a little distance was collected a group of children, lost in admiration of a remarkable-looking person who was strutting up and down the pavement. He had on an enormous turban of white muslin, a pale blue silk vest, very wide trousers confined at the ankles, no stockings, extraordinary-looking slippers, and a bright crimson shawl wound round his waist. His complexion was very dark, but his features were not those of a negro. He smiled and looked much pleased at the attention he was exciting, and said some words in a strange, foreign tongue, at which the urchins

who were surrounding him clapped their hands, while he nodded and smiled graciously. Then came out of the inn a tall, thin man, with light brown hair, but whose complexion had been bronzed by a burning sun until it was nearly as dark as that of his attendant. The contrast between the skin and the hair of the tall man rendered his appearance singular. His features were high and rather handsome, and his blue eyes were so quick and penetrating that they seemed to read the character of those whom he addressed at a glance. He looked narrowly at Bernard and Sidney Devereux as they passed him, and his eye followed the former, who was fair and had light hair like his mother, as long as he was in sight. He then stepped into the carriage, the footmen placed themselves in the rumble, the Hindoo got in beside his master, and they drove off. The boys could talk of nothing else but the handsome equipage they had seen and its strange-looking occupants, all the time they were detained in the village, and it formed the subject of their conversation until they reached home. On coming in sight

of the manor house, what was their astonishment to behold the Hindoo again, strutting backwards and forwards before the door, smoking an immense long pipe that nearly touched the ground! Annie and baby, for the latter still retained that name, though she had become a great girl, were sitting together on the steps, watching the puffs in much astonishment. The Hindoo smiled and nodded to the boys, and again spoke in his strange language, while Bernard and Sidney running up to Annie, asked what was the meaning of all this.

“Hush,” said she, “we were told not to make a noise. There is such a grand-looking, tall man in the parlour with mamma, and Kate and Reginald have been called in to see him, and poor mamma has been crying, for I heard her sobs. I don’t half like him, he must be bad, or mamma would not cry!”

Bernard’s face flushed, and he looked very indignant, for he was a fiery little fellow. He walked up to the Hindoo and tried to make him understand that he wished to know his master’s name. At last the Hindoo

seemed to comprehend Bernard's signs, and said words which sounded like "Hoozoor Sydajee." This left Bernard no wiser than he was, so at Annie's suggestion he went to the kitchen to seek the footmen, who, in their red velvet breeches and silk stockings, appeared to the little folks almost greater men than their master. They, however, could not enlighten him, for they had only been engaged in London two days before, and though they had already heard the name twenty times from the Hindoo, they could not catch it, but they fancied it sounded like "Huzzah! hip! Ajee!" though, of course, no Christian could go by that name. So Bernard and Sidney, quite at a loss, sat down beside Annie and baby, impatiently waiting till the parlour door should open. Marian, who had been engaged up stairs, came and joined them.

At last the door opened, and Kate came out with a flushed face, and glistening eyes.

"It is your uncle, Mamma's long-lost brother," said she, "and you are all to go in to see him. I don't like him at all, he is so stern and cruel."

Marian and Annie wished to run up stairs and put on clean frocks ; but Kate would not allow them.

“He has only one hour or two to stay,” she said, “more is the shame to him to spend so short a time with his only sister, whom he has not seen for so many years.”

“I declare Kate is quite in a huff,” cried Sidney. “I suppose she would rather we did not go in at all.”

“No, I wish you to go in,” said Kate, recovering her smiles ; “for I think that disagreeable man though he is, he may be useful to you, so pray be on your best behaviour, and remember he is your uncle.” So saying, Kate ushered them into the room. Their uncle held out his hand languidly, as they approached, and suffered each of them to take it, but on the whole, it was a very chilling and cold reception.

Mr. Baron, for so we shall call him, since the Hindostanee name by which he had gone for many years, sounds strange to English ears, had lately returned to England after a long residence in the East. He was in the service

of one of the native Indian potentates, and was now paying a hurried visit to his own country, being charged with a secret political mission by his master. He had come down to Yorkshire to pay a flying visit to his relatives, and had heard at the inn where the children first saw him, of his father's decease and his sister's marriage. He was not a man to show much feeling or animation of any kind ; however, he immediately desired to be directed to her dwelling, and without any ceremony alighted from his carriage, and introduced himself to her. Not waiting to inquire into her health and circumstances, he immediately began to talk of himself. He described his wealth, and recounted many traits of his greatness, and the considerations in which he was held by his sovereign. He waxed quite eloquent on the subject, and Kate listened in astonishment, while Reginald became much excited at hearing the account of his horses, his elephants, his slaves, in short, all the pomp and glitter of his Eastern magnificence. At last there was a pause in his glowing description, so Mrs. Devereux began to narrate

her own story, and describe the whole chequered course of her married life. It was then that Annie had overheard her sobs. Her brother listened with manifest impatience, which Kate's scrutinizing eyes were not slow to detect. At last he interrupted her, and telling her he had but a very short time to remain, requested to see the other children. They were accordingly brought in as we have described, and were a good deal chilled by his frigid reception ; for he appeared to take little interest in what did not concern himself, and when no longer astonishing the ears of his listeners, his manner subsided into languor.

"A poor sort of place, sister," he exclaimed, scanning the walls, and at a glance surveying the whole of the apartment, "however, good enough for one in your humble circumstances. Those who have never enjoyed better things don't feel the want of luxury."

"We have been very happy here," said his sister.

"Oh, I dare say," replied her brother ; "but in our Eastern clime, we have no conception of such privations. Young man," he continued,

turning to Reginald, "have the goodness to tell Hussein, whom I see walking up and down yonder, to fetch me my fur-lined cloak, for I cannot support the damp and cold of this miserable place."

Reginald's face flushed at the term "young man," and at the imperious tone in which his uncle spoke: however, he obeyed, and by means of signs contrived to convey his meaning to the Hindoo. When Hussein brought the cloak, his master said a few words to him in Hindostanee, and then taking possession of the only sofa in the apartment, he placed himself on it in Eastern fashion, to the astonishment of the younger ones, who would have laughed, had they not been too much frightened. Then Hussein brought him his lighted pipe, and without apology he commenced puffing, to Mrs. Devereux's no small annoyance. He was silent for nearly ten minutes; the children looked at each other then and fidgeted, putting on such comical looks, that Kate was obliged to get up and walk to the window, to hide her suppressed laughter. Reginald at last

broke the silence, by asking some questions about tigers, a subject which fired his youthful fancy. Then Mr. Baron, or Hoozoor Sydajee, as he liked best to be called, roused himself from his reverie, and gave such a glowing description of tiger hunting on the backs of elephants, as put Reginald in an ecstasy, and made Bernard come several steps nearer, for the latter had hitherto remained at a respectful distance. Annie now timidly asked questions, which proved her thoroughly conversant with the Arabian Nights and Eastern tales, making very droll inquiries about camels, caravanse-rais, brahmins, dervishes, &c. &c., and summing up her category, by asking if Haroun Alraschid and Aurungzebe were still alive. Her uncle appeared quite delighted with the child's *naïveté*, and taking off a magnificent ring presented it to her. He then began once more to speak gruffly, and to find fault with everything and every body he saw, except Annie and Reginald; the truth was his pipe was finished, and it was scarcely worth while to light another.

"The house is poor," said he, "but good enough for you all ; you have not a grain of spirit among you, or you could not live in it."

"Our dwelling must be in accordance with our circumstances," said Mrs. Devereux ; "my husband, who, though he did ally himself with *us*, was of one of the first families in England, contrived to make himself very happy here !"

Hoozoor Sydajee remarked the way in which his sister accented the word *us*, and observed with a sneer, "There is nothing so ridiculous as pretensions to gentility, which the purse is unable to keep up ; however, I am glad to hear that my late brother-in-law swallowed his pride and conformed to his circumstances ; I advise you all to do the same ! That young lady there," he continued, looking at Kate, whose eyes flashed fire, though she said nothing ; "appears to have a proud spirit of her own ; I advise her to humble it, for she will get nothing from me !"

Kate, who had been wounded by the blunt allusion to her father, replied, tossing her head proudly, "Nor would she demean herself by accepting anything, even were it offered !"

“ Kate, Kate ! go and get your uncle some refreshment,” interposed her mother who was anxious to make her leave the room, for she was apprehensive of an outbreak. Hoozoor Sydajee gave a curious smile, but suffered her to depart in silence.

“ As for you,” said he turning to Marian, “ you will never be pretty, so see that you be good !”

In this disparaging manner, he passed all the children in review, except Reginald and Annie, who as we said before, appeared to be the only two that met with his approbation. He finished all by asking his sister how much she had to live upon, and on her stating what her income was, he coolly remarked :—

“ Quite enough for you !”

He concluded by proposing to take the two eldest boys with him, and put them in a way to make their fortune at his sovereign’s court. Mrs. Devereux turned pale at the suggestion, and would have replied, had not her brother prevented her.

“ No, no,” he said, “ you will refuse at first ; I know women, they are all alike ; but the end

will be that you will see the advantage of my offer, and accept it. A week hence I shall expect your answer, and send down a confidential person for the boys ; I sail before the month is out, and their outfit must be got. As to you little coaxer," he continued, turning to Annie, with his grim face relaxed into a smile, "if you were a boy you should go with me, and as it is, I will not forget you."

So saying, and without a word more, he stepped into his carriage, which had been sometime waiting, having been ordered when he finished his pipe ; and so he and his *cortége* disappeared, as suddenly as they had arrived.

Mrs. Devereux retired into her room, followed by Kate, whose refreshments had remained untasted ; here she threw herself on the bed and wept bitterly. Reginald, Bernard, and Annie, went out to take a walk ; the two former could talk of nothing but tigers and elephants, while Annie amused herself listening to their conversation, and wondering what her uncle intended to do for her.

She was never tired admiring her ring, and making 't glance in the sunshine.

"Kate," said Mrs. Devereux to her daughter, as soon as she became a little more calm. "What do you think of your uncle, and of his proposal?"

"I think he himself is a selfish, heartless man, who seems not to have one grain of feeling in his composition!" said Kate; "but though I can't bear him, it seems to me, his offer is an excellent one for the boys, and if they wish to go with him, I hope you will allow them."

"You don't say so, Kate!" interrupted her mother, giving way once more to her tears; "how can you give such an opinion, when you dislike him so much? How could I trust my boys with him?"

Kate was silent during a minute or two, for the same thought had struck her; at last she said, "Reginald appears to have taken his fancy; besides, being a boy of spirit, I do not think he will be ill-treated; it is more for Bernard that I fear. However my uncle's

disagreeableness may all proceed from his manner, and he may have a good heart for aught we know! Some excuse should be made for him, considering he has spent so many years of his life amongst pagans."

Ere a week elapsed, her brother's prediction came true, and Mrs. Devereux yielded, but less to her own conviction, than to the urgent solicitations of the boys, whose imaginations were fired at the prospect of a sojourn in the East.

"You will consent for me too? Won't you, mamma?" said Annie; uncle will make me an Indian princess also, or something quite as good!"

"God forbid, my child, that I should have to part with you also! I hope you may be spared to your poor mother for many, many years!" exclaimed the widow, clasping little Annie to her bosom, while she kissed her over and over again. Annie did not seem to know whether to smile, or to cry, but her suspense was speedily ended, by the sharp quick knock of the postman, which startled them all, and set every heart beating. The two elder boys

rushed like mad creatures to the door, and while Mrs. Devereux with trembling fingers was feeling in her purse for the postage money, they brought her a missive addressed to her, with the London post-mark. She handed it to Kate, who opened it, and read aloud as follows :

DEAR SISTER,

Within two days after the receipt of this letter, a trusty person will arrive at the Manor House, to fetch the boys. They need bring no clothes with them, but what they have on, and one change of linen. The younger ones will be the better of their old clothes, as, with the exception of Annie, they need expect nothing from me. I have been thinking over Annie's affair ; at first I intended leaving her with you till my next return from India ; but, as that may not occur for the next dozen years, I think it better at once to insure her being properly educated, for I should not like her to turn after either you, or her sisters, as she would do by remaining at home. In saying this I

do not mean any offence to you, Marian, but I have my own notions! I have lived in an idolatrous country for many years, and conformed in so many ways to the habits and manners of those I have been thrown amongst, that I am become but an indifferent christian! Still I know what is right and wrong, and will adhere to the first. As to your boys, I mean to put them in the way of making their own fortunes; the case is different with Annie, she is to be my heiress, and therefore shall be brought up in the religion in which I was educated, Marian, and which our forefathers held. She is to be Roman Catholic. The person I shall send to you is a French priest, who has spent many years in this country. After leaving the boys with me in London, he will proceed to Paris with Annie, and place her in the convent of the Sacré Cœur, where the first French nobility are educated. I shall permit you to correspond with her of course, under the sanction of the good nuns, and when she attains the age of seventeen, you and she shall hear from

me again my further intentions in her regard.

“I remain your friend and brother,

“R. P. BARON.”

Kate had continued reading this epistle without looking at her mother, but as she drew towards the close, they were all startled by a piercing shriek,—Mrs. Devereux had fainted!

When she came to herself, she immediately desired to see her brother's letter, which she read over and over again, without making any remark. The children, with sympathizing looks, remained silent, eagerly watching their mother's countenance; at last she exclaimed:—

“I am wrong to repine!—Let God's will be done!” and then she retired to her own apartment, looking more like a corpse than an animated being. Kate was so frightened at the change which had come over her mother's countenance, that she hesitated at first to follow her, but kept her eyes fixed on the door by which she had issued, till roused from her reverie by Annie gliding up and whispering,—

“ What does all this mean ?—Am I to go or not ? ”

The next morning Mrs. Devereux got up as usual, and busied herself in making preparations for her sons' departure on the morrow, but still she did not say a word about Annie, though she often looked at her and sighed. When Kate, at Annie's suggestion, ventured to broach the subject, her only reply was,—

“ You shall hear to-morrow ! ”

And now before we go further, we must explain an allusion in Hoozoor Sydajee's curious letter. The Baron family, though they had not risen above the station of yeomen, had been for centuries upon the same soil ; and as they were the tenants of a Catholic family, had, like their masters, maintained the same faith, unaffected by the Reformation, and by the painful liabilities to which the law subsequently exposed them. Mrs. Devereux's father had been twice married, and her brother was the only fruit of the first union ; the second alliance had been formed with a Protestant, which accounted for the daughter being brought up in that belief.

The next day passed very slowly ; it seemed to the children as if the clock, on purpose to tantalize them, put off striking each hour, till double the proper time had elapsed. Dinner-time came and still there was no sign of their uncle's messenger ; at last, just as the supper was laid on the table, a carriage was heard driving up the lane ; it stopped at their door, and out stepped a mild, gentlemanly-looking man. He was dressed in a very long black coat or surtout, with a turned-down collar ; his head was shaved a little on the crown, and his greyish brown hair, though cut short in front, fell in long natural curls over his shoulders. Announcing himself as the Abbé de Dillon, sent by Mr. Baron to fetch the children, he was immediately welcomed, and invited to partake of the humble repast, which he did with the utmost cordiality, seeming glad of an opportunity of talking with the family. The carriage remained at the door, and Mrs. Devereux, whose tears were dropping fast, inquired if it was absolutely necessary that the boys should start the same evening. The Abbé replied, that such were his employer's

instructions; however, if it would be any consolation to Madame, and if she could provide him a bed, he would willingly wait till the morning. The boys clapped their hands with delight, and offered to give up their sleeping apartment; so after a little consultation, it was all well arranged, and the carriage was sent away.

That night, after all the others were gone to bed, Mrs. Devereux and Kate had a long conversation with the good Abbé. He told them, that he knew little or nothing of their singular relative; but that he had met him several times at the Portuguese Ambassador's, where they had more than once conversed together about the situation of the Portuguese catholics in India; he had besides named to him several French priests whom he had known in that country. The Abbé was exceedingly surprised when Mrs. Devereux told him, that her brother had been brought up a Catholic; and said, "So that accounts for what appeared to me his singular wish, to place his little niece at the convent of the Sacré Cœur. But you, madam, have said nothing hitherto of your intentions;

you have merely spoken of your sons. Do you mean to permit your daughter to go?"

Mrs. Devereux wept and wrung her hands, while Kate looked imploringly in her face.

"Just think, mamma," she exclaimed, "Annie is to be made her uncle's heiress. How can you hesitate?"

"She will be brought up in a different faith from all of us," sobbed Mrs. Devereux ;—"she will be estranged from us,—she will cease to care for us. After she is educated, she will be a stranger to her mother and sisters. Oh, cruel, cruel brother!"

The Abbé seemed quite affected.

"Madam," said he, "you take a strong view of the subject. The good nuns would teach her to love her relatives, and by their example and tuition, inculcate and foster all the domestic virtues. She will return to you when she leaves their care, so accomplished,—so elegant,—so good,—so beautiful, that your maternal heart will beat with great joy."

Kate could not help smiling at the French man's expressions, but her mother paid little heed to his consolation. "She will forget me !

she will forget me!" was all the answer she could return.

The good Abbé suggested that a constant correspondence might be kept up, and that all parcels and letters addressed to his care in London, should be forwarded through his means, free of expense, in the ambassador's bag. Besides he promised, that whenever he was in Paris, he would go to see Annie, and write to her mother himself, telling everything about her. At last Mrs. Devereux consented to let Annie go; but had her brother sent any other messenger than the Abbé de Dillon, it is not likely she would have done so. Kate was delighted with the Abbé, and he also seemed much pleased with her; for her frank independent spirit, good feeling, and strong sense, rendered her interesting, though totally unlike the French girls of her age, whom he had met.

We shall pass over the sad and painful parting which took place on the morrow. Poor Mrs. Devereux's feelings none but a mother can guess. The children all wept bitterly, but perhaps none felt more than Kate the parting

with her friend Reginald, the good-natured Bernard, and her own dear pet, her darling Annie. The Abbé did his best to say words of comfort to Mrs. Devereux, but the Frenchman's sympathy and politeness passed unheeded; she had neither eyes nor ears but for her children. His last words to Kate made more impression, and at a subsequent period, she recalled them. They were :—

“ I hope, Miss Devereux, that after the conversation of last night, you will regard me as a friend. I have left my address with Mrs. Devereux, and if at any time, you are in difficulty, of whatever kind it may be, and if my poor advice or recommendation can be of any service to you, you have only to write to me frankly and simply, and you shall receive immediate attention. I am very poor, but I have influential friends, so that I am not altogether powerless.”

So saying, the Abbé bowed once more to the sorrowful group that were standing at the door of the manor-house, and following the children into the carriage, they were speedily whirled out of sight. The last gift of Mrs.

Devereux to the 'children, was a Bible to each of them, and she made Annie, in particular, promise to read a chapter every morning, fondly hoping that this might prove an antidote to the influence of the nuns.

CHAPTER III.

“Be it as you shall privately determine, either for her stay or going.”—*Othello*,

AFTER the departure of the children, Mrs. Devereux remained for some time very sad and dull ; she often retired to her own apartment, where she shed many tears. Two or three days after they were gone, she received a letter from the Abbé, announcing their safe arrival in London, which seemed to raise her spirits a little ; shortly after that she heard again from him, to say that he had delivered Annie in safety to the good nuns, who were much pleased with her appearance. The dear

child sent all sorts of affectionate messages to her mother, brother, and sisters, and amongst other things, desired him to say, that she had got leave from the nuns to write home once a month ; this, of course, gave poor Mrs. Devereux no small comfort. It might be ten days after this, when a second letter arrived from her brother :—

“ Dear sister,” it commenced, “ This is to inform you that the day after to-morrow we sail for India. The boys have got a splendid outfit, and look more like gentlemen now than they ever did when you saw them. Reginald is a sharp boy, and has got some notion of command, which I like to see ; his high features resemble my own, and I shall not be ashamed of him anywhere. Bernard has more of the clown in his composition, and often reminds me of you, particularly as he is not very bright ; he seems very amiable, and all that sort of thing ; but I consider too good a disposition rather against a young man who has to push his fortune. However, I promised to take him, so let it pass ! I’d

rather have him, with all his deficiencies, than the young lady who carries her head so high, and has such an uncivil tongue, Miss Kate I mean ; her pride will be humbled before long, I prophesy ; and let her remember she'll get nothing from me ! As to Marian, make a good housewife of her, and keep her to plain sewing ; for, mark my words, she'll never be a beauty, so she had better learn betimes to make herself useful. That laughing boy, Sidney, that comes next to her, seems to me to have little in him, judging from his expression, and the grin on his face,—you had better make a dancing-master of him ! The youngest of all, whom you call Baby, appears a poor sort of a thing, and I doubt if you will rear her ! Indeed, I do not envy you the charge of those you have got at home. So now, having given you my best advice, as to how you should bring them up, I consider myself to have fulfilled a brother's duty, and begging you all to remember that in taking three I have done enough for the family,

“ I remain yours,

“ R. P. B.”

It was now about the time when the late Mr. Devereux used to receive his half-yearly remittances. One came as usual, that which was settled on him by his family before his marriage ; the other, derived from a source which he could never find out, now altogether ceased. This of course subjected the widow and her family to many inconveniences, and at last she made up her mind to write to her husband's relatives, and make an appeal to their generosity. She knew little about them, but was aware that he had a brother, the present owner of the family property, a magnificent estate in a distant county, the rental of which was many thousands a year. A letter therefore was composed with the greatest care, and after being several times altered and re-written, was at last despatched to this unknown relative. They waited a week,—a fortnight,—a month,—but no answer came ! Then Kate wrote again, and spoke of her father's death, and the situation in which his orphans were left. But this second appeal met with no better success. So the disconsolate family hoped against hope, and tried to flatter them-

selves that at the next half-yearly term the two remittances would arrive as formerly. All the money they had was absorbed in paying for the necessaries of life, and the children's clothes began to look exceedingly shabby, and betray marks of frequent patching and mending.

One afternoon, as they were sitting at work, Mrs. Devereux was startled by Kate exclaiming suddenly :

“Mamma, I do not mean to be a burden to you any longer !”

“A burden to me, my dear Kate !” said her mother, interrupting her. “What do you mean ? So far from being a burden to me, you have, since your poor father's death, been my support, my friend, my consoler, my everything.”

“Yes, mamma,” said Kate, the tears running down her cheeks, as she threw her arms round her mother's neck, “I have tried and wished to be all that to you, but, perhaps, I have not succeeded so well as a more gentle, humble, reasonable character would have done. Though I may have gone wrong in many

ways, it has not been for want of love towards you, my dear, dear mother."

"Kate, what does all this excitement mean?" exclaimed her mother, starting back and looking at her. "You have always been good and kind to me, Kate. What have you done, or what do you propose doing, that you speak so strangely?"

"I have done nothing yet, dear mother," said Kate, her tears turning into smiles at her mother's alarm, "but, if you permit, I am determined to do something to aid you."

"I shall be very glad, my dear Kate," said Mrs. Devereux, "if you can think of anything to make a little money; but at present I do not see what you can do more; you work from morning till night at something or another, and indeed deny yourself too much your proper recreation."

"You allude to what I do at home," said Kate, "but, mamma, can you not take a hint from the dear old fairy tales, which you used to tell us so prettily during the long winter evenings when we were children, and sat by the fire so merrily, and were all so happy

together? Have you forgotten the old beginning to many a story, 'There was once upon a time a young girl, who, when she was grown up, went out into the world to push her fortune.' Now that is what I wish to do, mamma; I wish to leave you for a time, that I may go and push my fortune, and when I make a little money I shall send it to you to pay for the education of Sidney and baby. Marian is steadier, and has more sense than I have; she will take my place, and be your right hand, when I am gone."

Mrs. Devereux looked very grave and sorrowful; but she did not make the violent opposition to Kate's plan that she had expected.

"I was not prepared for this," she said, with the tears in her eyes; "your plan reflects credit upon yourself, Kate; but I must consider of it, long and deeply, before I sanction it. In what capacity do you think of going?"

"That will depend on what situation I can get," replied Kate. "Farmer Bradford takes in the 'Times' newspaper; I shall borrow

it from him, and read all the advertisements, till I find what is likely to suit, and then I shall reply to it. I suppose something in the way of nursery governess or companion might do for me."

"Kate, Kate!" exclaimed her mother, with a sigh; "with your proud spirit, how will you ever submit to the mortifications of such a life?"

"I must swallow my pride, as my uncle recommends," said Kate, laughing; and then she continued more seriously, "the truth is, mamma, that, when I feel a thing *must* be done, I can do it. You do not know what a *will* I have!"

"Well, Kate," said her mother, scrutinizing her with her calm, affectionate eyes; "I shall say neither yea nor nay at present; you and I both must pray to God for guidance, and after a few days we shall talk over this subject again."

Kate, however, did not wait to receive her mother's sanction before taking some steps to further her object. She borrowed the

newspapers, and answered the advertisement that pleased her most. It was not that she meant to leave home without her mother's permission ; but she did not like to lose time, and saw no harm in getting particulars relative to what she wanted, as soon as possible. It was a situation as nursery governess about which she wrote, and in the course of five days she received an answer. Her mother was present when the letter arrived, to Kate's no small confusion, as she had said nothing to prepare her for seeing it. Kate hastily explained the circumstance, asking her mother's pardon for being so hasty in her proceedings, and then she placed the epistle in her hands to open. Mrs. Devereux sighed and looked very sad, but she made no reply ; then giving Kate a kiss, she opened the letter. It contained, besides the answer, the two testimonials in her favour which Kate had inclosed in the same cover with her application, and which she had obtained from Farmer Bradford's wife and from the curate of the parish, the only persons, besides her mother,

to whom she had confided her intentions. It was dated from Manchester, and ran as follows :—

“ Mrs. Gubbins is satisfied with Miss Devereux’s account of herself, more by reason of her name and genteel hand-writing, than that she is pleased altogether with her accomplishments. Indeed Mrs. Gubbins is sorry that she can neither teach scientific dancing, nor thoroughbred music, as Mr. Gubbins and me are dotingly fond of the fine arts and literati in general. However, if Miss Devereux (who has a very genteel name, upon my word,) will undertake to teach the children grammar, rhetoric, and good English, besides washing the young ones at night, mending their stockings, and the hose of Mr. and Mrs. Gubbins, she may perhaps suit that lady. She will be expected to amuse Mrs. Gubbins in the evenings when she is alone, but to leave the parlour directly when Mr. Gubbins comes home from his office. She will dine with the children in general ; but when they dine in the parlour, as they always do on Sundays, Miss

Devereux can take her meals with the other domestics. I must insist particularly on the children's hair being nicely curled ; also that you make yourself useful in every way in your power, from reading Byron to Mrs. Gubbins, and writing all my notes, down to helping to clean the silver when there is company, and shampooing Mr. Gubbins under my superintendence when he is poorly. As salary is of course not so much an object with you as a comfortable home, Miss Devereux will receive twelve pounds a-year, and is requested to write to Mrs. Gubbins directly, and say what day she will come. I forgot to mention that there are seven children, and one grown up, a very fine young man by a former marriage. As he is at Oxford at present, I need not caution Miss Devereux against him. The other young people are all charming, full of genius and taste for the fine arts ; as yet perfectly unsophisticated, and true children of nature, with a fiery ardour of character, and an indomitable spirit which has never yet been conquered. Mrs. Gubbins has never hitherto been able to find nursery-maids of such enlightened minds, and

(as Carlyle would express it) of such 'many-sided views of human nature,' as could comprehend her darlings ; so her attendants for a long time past have seldom staid above a month. However she hopes great things from the noble nature of her future nursery-governess, to whose name she has taken a mighty fancy.

I remain, my dear,

Your future mistress,

ADELINA GENOVEVA GUBBINS."

Kate laughed heartily when she read this note, and indeed Mrs. Devereux was amused for the time, and forgot her sadness ; when the former recovered her gravity, she took pen in hand, and wrote a civil but decided refusal to the worthy Mrs. Gubbins. Kate, after this, tried, with her mother's approbation, to get other situations, which she saw advertised in the newspapers ; but for some time her efforts were unavailing, for she seldom or never received an answer, and when one did arrive, it was unsatisfactory. At last her patience began to wear out, and she gradually became very thin,

pale, and melancholy. One morning about this time, the spirits of the family were cheered by a letter written partly by Annie who was evidently making great progress, and partly by the nun under whose superintendence she and a few others of the same age were placed. The nun wrote in the most flattering terms of her sweet temper and great natural ability ; while Annie expressed herself as being as happy as a queen, and delighted both with the residence itself, and the people who surrounded her. She mentioned having seen the Abbé lately, who was on his way back to London, after some months' residence in various parts of France. When he was mentioned, Kate started, and the colour came into her face ; her mother looked at her in surprise, but Kate smiled and said, " Here is another string to my bow, which I had forgotten."

So Kate wrote to the Abbé immediately,—stating her circumstances, and requesting his advice and assistance. She got an answer, by return of post, from the worthy priest, in which he thanked her for the proof of confidence she had given him, in detailing her

plans, and expressed great interest in her welfare, as well as his strong desire to assist her ; but, unfortunately, he was on the point of starting on urgent business to Rome, where he expected to pass the winter, so was unable at present to be of much service. He begged she would, if possible, delay her resolution, until his return in the following spring, when he hoped to pay the family a visit, and added that it was very probable he might then be able materially to further her views. In case she had decided to leave home immediately, he enclosed a letter to the Portuguese ambassador, his great friend, which she must be sure to deliver, should she ever go to London.

Poor Kate nearly cried with vexation, when she received this letter ; not that she was disappointed in the Abbé's kindness, but she was one of those impetuous characters, who lose heart when their wishes are delayed. "I cannot wait !" she said, "I must go on answering advertisements till I find something to suit me !" The sight of her mother's pale, anxious countenance and sorrowful expression went to her heart. Since she had made up her mind

to go, waiting for the Abbé would only prolong their misery, and she longed for the parting to be over ; for she felt it would be much better both for her mother and herself. At this juncture, a new advertisement struck her attention ; it was not the sort of situation she had proposed to herself, it is true ; but then she had almost despaired of finding anything to suit her as governess, or companion. If truth must be told, Kate was sometimes whimsical, and though the situation in question was not such as any of her friends would ever have thought of for her, it took her fancy, and try for it she must. The advertisement ran as follows :—

“Wanted, a young woman, as attendant on two delicate children, who have left the nursery. Dressing them, playing with them, and rambling about with them in the open air, will be the chief duties required. As the service is light, and the wages high, none but a superior young person of good address, and solid plain education, need apply.

N.B.—A farmer's daughter, under twenty

years of age, would be preferred. Address to Mrs. Charteris, Charteris Hall, ——shire."

The moment Kate saw this, she ran to her mother,—“I have found what I want at last!” she exclaimed; but she checked herself, for a gentleman was in the parlour with Mrs. Devereux. It was only the curate, as she discovered when he turned his head; so she made no scruple about reading it aloud.

“Is she not mad?” said her mother, turning to the clergyman. “It is not a nursery governess that is wanted here, but an attendant!”

“So I see mamma!” said Kate, “and that is just what pleases me! As you say yourself, my proud spirit can ill brook the mortifications to which I might be subjected, either as nursery governess or companion. Now, if I take this situation, where the duties I see are so light, I shall never be called into the parlour, where of course my nature would prompt me to assume an equality that might be disagreeable to my employers. The person wanted here is to be a companion, as well as attendant on the children, which

would suit me exactly, for I should not mind at all doing anything menial for children that I loved ; it is so different from demeaning oneself to grown up persons !”

“But,” said Mr. Redding, for that was the curate’s name, “if you go as a servant, you must be prepared to do everything you are desired, and you might occasionally be asked to do things not mentioned in this advertisement, which might hurt your pride amazingly ! Besides, have you considered your intercourse with fellow servants, and your dining in the servants’ hall ?”

Kate’s face flushed scarlet, but she replied : “I take for granted, from what is said, that I shall have little to do with the other servants, and probably get my meals in the nursery, otherwise I should not go.”

“There is no nursery, Kate,” said her mother ; “the advertisement states that the young people have left it.”

Kate looked vexed, but still she would not give in ; so she replied, after a little hesitation, “I am very anxious to inquire further particulars about this situation ; I cannot say

why, but I have a strong impression that it will suit me. Pray, do not oppose it, dear mamma, till we know more."

"Well, Kate," said Mr. Redding; "though I have always considered you rather a positive young lady, yet to do you justice you are often right; so I willingly join with you in begging Mrs. Devereux to suspend her judgment till she hears further particulars."

"You surely never would propose writing in your own name, Kate, about a servant's situation," said her mother, somewhat indignantly. "You that are so proud of being a Devereux!"

Kate coloured. "I do not look upon this in the light of a servant's situation, mamma," said she. "Does not the advertisement say, that none but a superior young person need apply? However, it would be just as well, that I should drop my own name and take another. I have never liked the idea of a Devereux going out as governess even, far less in any inferior capacity."

"Is she not mad?" asked Mrs. Devereux,

turning towards Mr. Redding ; "To hear her
"pride, and then to think of her project !"

"She is not mad," said the curate, laughing,
"but she has strange notions."

"The more I think of it," said Kate, "the
more I feel the presentiment that this affair
will turn out well. So, now, sir," she con-
tinued, addressing herself to the curate, "as I
am most anxious to succeed in this instance,
may I beg the favour of your writing for me,
and guaranteeing my respectability ?"

"Certainly, Kate," said the old curate ; "I
shall do whatever you wish. But since you
are not to pass as Miss Devereux, by what
name shall I call you ?"

"I must have a name beginning with D,"
said Kate ; "for all my clothes are marked
K. D., and it ought to be a plebeian name, in
order not to attract notice. Suppose you call
me Kate Dukes, and describe me as the
daughter of parents who had seen better
days ?"

Mrs. Devereux sighed and wiped a tear
from her eye, while the curate replied :

"Be it so, Kate, I go now to fulfil your

request; only let me take the newspapers with me."

About a week after this conversation, the curate received a letter from Mrs. Charteris, in answer to the one he had despatched; so he immediately walked up to the manor house, to show it to Kate and her mother. He put on his spectacles and read as follows :—

"SIR,

"I am much pleased with your description of the young woman who is desirous of becoming the attendant of my grandchildren, and think she will suit me exactly. I had not anticipated hearing so quickly of the precise sort of person I desired—namely, a superior young woman, of good address and plain education, with sense enough to look out for a subordinate situation instead of setting up as nursery governess, and placing herself in a situation of which it is difficult both for herself and her mistress to define the exact duties, and avoid giving offence to each other."

“Exactly so,” replied Kate, interrupting the curate ; “the grandmother is a sensible woman,—I like that !”

“Patience, a little, my dear Kate,” said the curate ; “wait till you hear the rest.”

“Kate Dukes will be expected to wash and dress the young people, and amuse them in the house, or ramble with them in the fields, all the time they are not engaged at their studies. They take their meals with the governess in one of their play-rooms, and as the under-housemaid has always been accustomed at that time to wait upon them, the services of Kate will then be dispensed with. She is at liberty either to take her own meals in their apartments, after they have finished, or to partake of them with the lady’s maid and housekeeper ; but the first arrangement would be preferred, as leaving her more time to devote to the children. The wages are twenty pounds a-year, which I consider sufficient to remunerate the services of a very superior person. Should Kate Dukes not appear to be such after a month’s

trial, she shall be sent home. I must particularly insist that she hold as little intercourse as possible with the other servants, and keep herself very retired and quiet. This day three weeks, I shall expect her at Charteris Hall, if you do not write to the contrary.

“ Believe me, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ MAUDE CHARTERIS.”

“ P.S.—I have desired the housekeeper to inclose with this the directions for her travelling route ; of course all her expenses will be paid by me.”

As the curate finished the letter, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Kate looking very thoughtful, while her mother had a strange, perplexed expression.

“ Well, Kate,” said the latter, “ you surely never mean to go. Only think of washing and dressing the children !”

“ I have been accustomed to that all my

life, you know, mamma," said Kate, "and I should not mind doing it as Kate Dukes, when it would be impossible, if I were kindly treated, that my pride should be hurt, because I could excuse much when I remember that they do not know who I really am. Depend upon it, dear mother, I should suffer far less going in this way than if I called myself Miss Devereux, the governess, and expected more attention and consideration than I should be likely to meet with."

"Well, Kate, with these notions, this is exactly the thing for you," said the curate; "But I shall be very curious to hear how you get on."

"There is some fun in this," said Kate; "it takes my fancy amazingly. Here I am a young princess in disguise!"

"Kate, Kate! I have no patience with this folly!" said her mother, bursting into tears and leaving the room.

"Mr. Redding, what am I to do?" asked Kate, who was like to cry too, when she saw how her mother was taking it; but who was

not sorry that she had gone, as she wished to talk with the old clergyman alone.

“Try the thing, by all means,” was his reply; “I engage to get your mother’s consent.”

CHAPTER IV.

“That look of sweetness form’d to please,
That elegance devoid of art,
That dignity that’s lost in ease.”

CARTWRIGHT.

All preliminaries having been fixed, the day at last arrived for Kate’s departure. She was to go in farmer Bradford’s conveyance to Edmonstone in the evening, and his wife had procured her a bed for the night, in the house of one of her acquaintances. She was to start at four in the morning next day, in the stage coach that ran to Bracklebury, which was a large town a few miles distant from Charterishall. At the inn where the coach was to put

up (as a letter from the housekeeper informed her), a man with a covered spring cart would be in waiting to convey her and her luggage to her future residence. Poor Kate's heart nearly died within her, as the morning dawned of the day in which she was to leave the home of her childhood. The hours, after she got up, passed slowly and heavily; she felt she had a great deal to say to her mother, for the last time; but that poor mother looked so sad, so unutterably depressed, and cast down, that Kate almost feared to break the oppressive silence, lest she should altogether give way and a painful scene ensue. They sat down to their meals as usual, but it was only the younger ones that could eat; and every morsel that Kate tried to swallow seemed about to choke her. All her preparations had been made some days before, so that, except to put a few things in her little portmanteau, she had nothing whatever to do, during that long day. At last after dinner, she determined to talk to her mother, who had all the forenoon maintained the most complete reserve, and avoided even meeting her eye.

"Cruel, cruel mother!" she exclaimed, "why

do you not speak to me? Have I offended you? Have you ceased to love me? Or shall I stay at home to please you after all that has passed?"

Her mother still preserved the same immoveable expression of countenance; but the tears were filling her eyes.

"Mother dear! speak to me I implore you!" exclaimed Kate, dropping on her knees, the tears running down her cheeks.

"I am past feeling!" said her mother in a low, sad voice; "I cannot realize that you are going away! My faculties are stupified and benumbed.—I have no feeling!"—She stopped for a moment, hesitated, and then burst into tears—"God forgive me!" she exclaimed, "for talking so to my own, my first born, my darling Kate! I love you too much, too dearly, Kate! you have been all in all to me, since I have been left alone! You have been my stay, my support, my comforter! My husband, my boys,—dear, dear little Annie—all are gone from me! The grave has taken one! Time and absence are gradually bereaving me of the others! And now you, Kate!—It is very, very hard to bear!"

Kate did her best to console her poor

mother, pointing out to her, the advantages of her new situation, and how near, comparatively speaking, she still would be—scarcely more than one long day's journey from the manor-house! And so amidst tears and sobs, and mutual unburdenings of the heart, the hour struck for her departure. We shall pass over the painful scene, nor tell how often Kate's heart failed her, and she was on the point of saying, "Mother, I shall stay!" And she would have done it too, had it not been her firm conviction, that go she must, sooner or later, as their income could by no possibility, maintain so many, without great privations.

The next morning she was up and dressed in good time, and had taken her place in the coach, as the Edmonstone town-clock struck four. Her attire was very plain and simple—a brown stuff gown, a dark plaid shawl, a neat collar, and a coarse straw bonnet that had narrow sarcenet ribbon tying it down, while underneath it, appeared a little net cap, without either ribbons or flowers. In short she was so plainly attired, that not one servant out of a thousand, would have been content to

travel, clad in such a manner. But in this very plainness, there was a species of elegance, set off as it was, by Kate's air and figure, and no one could possibly have taken her for anything but a lady. The housekeeper had desired her to go outside the coach, but this, farmer Bradford would not hear of, and having engaged to take her place, paid the difference of the fare, out of his own pocket, to secure her an inside seat.

It was scarcely daylight when the coach started, so she turned her face towards a corner, and gave way silently to her emotions. After a while, when the day began to break, the varied scenery excited her attention, and the morning air revived her. Soon she raised her head, and looked at her companions, but they were not particularly interesting, and in the course of the day they were changed several times. At last, about noon, the coach stopped at a large town, and while changing horses, a tall and fashionably dressed young man walked up to take his place on the top. Giving a rapid glance inside, Kate caught his eye, and he stopped short.

"I say, Dev., what are you dreaming about?" cried a voice from the top, "are not you coming up?"

"'Pon my soul I dont know," replied the young man, still looking at Kate, "I am half thinking of going inside, this stage."

"Nonsense!" cried the person above; "do as you like after it gets dark, but don't waste this glorious day, boxed up inside! Come along man, and have a cigar!"

Upon this the tall young man, after taking another long look at Kate, who blushed and turned away her head, sprung up beside his companion.

"What a fine girl!" exclaimed he as he took his place; "I must take a turn inside by and bye, to make acquaintance with her!"

When the horses were being changed at the next stage, Kate again saw the young man. He alighted and walked up and down, evidently for the purpose of getting a glimpse of her, but at last entered the inn, when he saw that she was determined to keep her face turned away; she then heard him call for a glass of brandy-and-water, and just before the

coach started, she recognized his voice again asking for a second. Nearly the same scene occurred at every stage where they stopped, after which the passengers on the top got more and more noisy. They sung glees and jovial drinking songs, their talk and laughter were incessant, and every now and then they shouted and hallooed to the people going past. It seemed as if Bedlam were let loose on the top ; so Kate felt very thankful that her friend, the farmer, had secured her a place inside, apart from such annoyances ; for it was evident that some of them had drunk more than was good for them. It might be about four o'clock that the last inside passenger but Kate left the conveyance, and she was left alone. The tall young man presently came up to the window, and politely asked Kate if he might procure her some refreshment. From his tone and air he appeared to be a gentleman ; but he was not standing very steadily. Kate thanked him and refused, turning her head away as quickly as possible.

“Guard !” he exclaimed, “ I am going inside this stage ! Open the door !”

“Sorry you can’t, sir,” said the guard, looking in at the window on the other side, and taking pity upon Kate’s face of terror, which was turned imploringly towards him.—“It’s against rule, sir! We can’t allow you on no account!”

“But you shall!” said the young man with an oath, attempting to open the door.

“Come, come, Devy!” cried his companion, “it is too bad to annoy a lady! Come up and have another cigar!”

“There are the other inside passengers coming!” said the guard, who by this time had his shoulder placed against the door, which the young man had tried to open, and who now pointed to a group advancing towards them.

“Then, by Jove!” said the young man, “if I do get on the top I’ll drive, so look to your necks!” and so saying he regained his old seat beside the coachman.

Of the group pointed out by the guard, only one lady entered the coach. She was middle-aged and pale, wore spectacles, and a blue veil. Though plain, and rather dowdy,

in her appearance, she seemed a gentlewoman ; soon she commenced a conversation and made herself agreeable, being able to give some description or anecdote of almost every gentleman's place, besides telling the names of the villages which they passed. When Kate discovered that she was going all the way to Bracklebury, she ventured to ask her if she knew Charteris Hall.

" I know it perfectly," said the lady ; " for many years of my life were passed within half a mile of it. My brother is curate of Charteris-long-Stoke, and the family at the hall attend divine service at his church every Sunday. I know all about them, and have always taken an interest in every member of the family."

" I wish you would tell me something about them," said Kate, " as my friends are interested in the family, though I do not know anything of them as yet."

" You know, of course," said the lady, " that the hall, and the magnificent estate surrounding it, belong to old Mrs. Charteris."

" I know nothing about it," said Kate with

a smile, "so all you like to tell will be quite new to me."

"Well," continued her companion, "the old lady was the only daughter and heiress of Mr. Charteris, and a very haughty and spoiled young woman she was in her day, if all accounts be true. When she left school, her father took her to London to bring her out, expecting, no doubt, that she would make some grand match, and that he should have a duke, or an earl at least, for his son-in-law. However, the lady fair disappointed his high expectations; for, before her first season was over, she had refused some of the best matches in England, and fallen in love with a younger son! Her father was very angry, and brought her home to the hall immediately; but it was no use, for her lover followed. Then he locked her up, and forbade any communication between them; upon this Miss Maude Charteris took ill, and grew worse and worse, till at last the doctors declared, that the old gentlemen must give in, if he wished to save her life! So papa consented at last, but with a very bad grace, revenging himself on his future

son-in-law, by doing all in his power to prevent him enjoying his wife's fortune. In the first place, he was obliged to drop his own name and take hers; and though he begged hard for permission to keep both names, the old man was inexorable, and threatened, unless he gave him his word to comply, he would cut the young couple off with a shilling! He would not even allow the eldest son to be called at the baptismal font by his father's name, and it was not till after the old man's death that, when a younger son was born, they ventured to give it to him. Then, while he lived, though he idolized his daughter, and gave her almost everything she could wish, there was one exception, in which he never would comply with her entreaties. He would not treat his son-in-law as he ought, but kept him in thralldom by stopping his pecuniary supplies whenever he thought proper. Old Mr. Charteris did not live long, and perhaps it was fortunate; when he died, he settled everything on his daughter, and his son-in-law for the first time began to breathe."

"Well," said Kate, as the lady stopped her

narrative for a moment, "I hope Mrs. Charteris made over everything again to her husband as fast as possible?"

"No, my dear, she did not," said the lady; "I do not suppose she could, even had she wished. But if truth must be told, though very fond of her husband, her nature resembled her father's, and she was, and is still, very fond of power. Her husband, after a few years, sunk into a mere cipher, for she ruled the establishment, not only within doors but without, taking the whole management of the estate."

"That was, indeed, very foolish," said Kate.

"It had an unfortunate effect," continued the lady, "both on her husband and children. The former took to drinking, and died in the prime of life. Of the latter, there only arrived at maturity, a daughter and two sons. The daughter married early, and died young, leaving two children, who live with their grandmother at the hall. The eldest son, Lionel, is in everything the counterpart of

what his mother was. He is a strikingly handsome young man, with amiable qualities and excellent abilities, but they are neutralized by one fault; he is as proud as Lucifer!"

"A young man in his position," said Kate, "may be excused a little pride, I think."

"He has never forgiven his mother," continued the lady, "for her treatment of his father. Besides, his pride is chafed and galled by his own dependent situation, for, except two hundred a-year, his paternal inheritance, he receives nothing from the Charteris estate, but at his mother's pleasure.—But bless me," continued the lady, pausing a moment, "what a noise the outside passengers are making!"

The coach just then stopped to change horses; it was getting dusk, and the tall young man did not pass by the window this time, but Kate recognized his voice having an altercation with the coachman, which ended by the latter saying,—

"Well, now, sir, since you insist upon it, you may have the reins when we come to the last stage, where the road is level. But I do

assure you, sir, it is as much as my place is worth to let you drive before that."

"Come, old fellow, hold your tongue," said the first speaker; "you know that I am a better whip than any you have got on the road."

"I know well your honour be's," said the coachman; "but no man can drive cattle in a straight line when he is seeing double! No offence to you, sir! I could not myself, if I was 'tosticated!"

The guard's horn drowned the conversation, and Kate heard no more; but the lady in the blue veil put her head out of the window, and adjured the coachman to take care what he was about, and not peril the lives of unprotected females. Kate thought she heard a laugh outside; but just then the coach began to move, and no attention was paid to her companion's expostulations. After being driven on a few minutes, at a steady pace, the lady's fears subsided, and she resumed her narrative.

"The younger son, my dear," she continued, "is a very wild fellow, but, in my opinion, is the best of the two. He is always

getting into scrapes ; yet, with all his foibles, everybody likes Devereux, and his mother adores him !”

“ What did you call him, ma’am ?” asked Kate.

“ Devereux,” replied the lady, “ Devereux Charteris. He has quite as good a chance of getting the property as his elder brother ; for Lionel is engaged to marry an heiress, and if so, won’t need it ; besides, everybody knows which is the mother’s favourite.—By the way,” continued the lady, after a pause, “ I wonder I did not see my brother when the coach stopped last time. I have a brother, Miss, on the top. My brother, the merchant, going with me to visit my brother, the parson.”

Kate did not answer, for she had been quite struck with the singular coincidence of her own name being borne by the younger son of her future mistress.

“ And now my dear,” continued her talkative companion ; “ may I beg that you will enlighten me as to your whereabouts ? With what family in Bracklebury do you propose staying ?”

"I am not going to reside in Bracklebury," said Kate, who began to feel a little ashamed, and to realize the impropriety of which she had been guilty, in getting so much information about the inhabitants of the hall, which common sense now told her, her companion would probable have been sorry to give, had she known she was on her way to become their inmate.

"May I ask to what part of the neighbourhood you are going?" inquired the lady, who after having given Kate so much information, seemed to think she had established a claim to have her own curiosity satisfied in turn.

"Not far from Bracklebury," said Kate, who felt quite confused.

"Well, my dear," continued the pertinacious old maid, "no doubt you have good reasons for being so very close. But I should like to know how a young female like yourself, who, excuse the compliment, Miss, appears to me so respectable, comes to be travelling alone! You of course have friends about Bracklebury. Or have you any thing to do with the hall, that you asked so many questions about it?"

"I am going there," said Kate, at last mustering courage to reply.

"Going there, Miss! I never heard anything so strange," said the lady; "why did you not tell me so at first? Was there ever anything so sly? Of course you are not going as a visitor," she continued, glancing at Kate's dress; "is it as nursery-governess, or what is it, my dear? I never heard of their present governess being about to leave. When I stay with my brother at Charteris-Long-Stoke, I make a point of hearing every thing that passes at the hall; however, I have been absent now a long time, so great changes may have taken place. Mrs. Charteris has always been very kind to her governess, my dear, so you will see the best of company; and I do hope you will frequently come up and take tea with me, so that I may hear all that goes on, and what the young men are about."

"I am not going as governess, ma'am," interposed Kate, as soon as she could get in a word, "I am going as the children's-maid."

"Bless me!" said the lady, "you don't mean to confess that I have been talking all this

time to a servant ! The world has truly come to a pretty pass. However I shall certainly consider it my duty to warn Mrs. Charteris and the housekeeper about your being so sly. A servant indeed !”

Kate was so mortified she could hardly refrain from tears, and was about to answer, when the attention of both herself and her companion was arrested by the frightful rapidity at which the coach was proceeding down hill.

“I have no patience with such careless driving,” said the lady, “and I don’t mean to pay either guard or coachman one sixpence ; besides, I shall complain of them to the coach-owners when we get to Bracklebury. To think of the precious lives of young females like you and me being imperilled ! Not to speak of my brother, the merchant on the top !”

But the blue-veiled lady had little time to bemoan herself, for on coming to the foot of the hill, the coach was upset. Fortunately, there was no one much hurt, as the ground was very soft in consequence of rain. Blue-veil broke her spectacles, and became hysterical.

The leading horses burst their traces and scampered off, but fortunately the wheelers were disabled when the coach fell, so that they remained motionless, and the outside passengers having been pitched off on the soft mud and scarcely hurt at all, were able to assist the ladies to extricate themselves. They were both obliged to get out by the window, and blue-veil, who was sobbing violently, appeared to suffer much at the idea of showing her ankles in jumping down. Kate did her best to assist her ; but she rather repulsed her, as she seemed to prefer being helped by the gentlemen. Her brother, who was easily recognized by his likeness to her, gave her his arm, and still sobbing as she was, she bowed to the tall young man, and uttered some indistinct salutation. He drew himself up, and replying to her recognition very stiffly, turned away and addressed himself to Kate, who was trying to keep as close as possible to her female companion for protection, although the latter scarcely took notice of her.

“ I fear the accident has frightened you very much,” said the young man to Kate, being

evidently quite sober now, "I do not know how to apologize sufficiently for my carelessness; thank God you have not been hurt, or I never should have forgiven myself!"

Kate did not reply, but kept close to the lady and her brother, who were walking together.

"I believe our best plan is to walk on to Bracklebury, which is scarcely more than two miles distant, and thence we can despatch some conveyance for our luggage," continued the young man, not noticing Kate's silence. "I shall just return to see that the boxes are safe and then rejoin you."

Kate tried to keep close to the lady, but could not get her to notice her; for a passenger, an acquaintance of her brother's, had gone to her other side. One or two others came up, and walked alongside, but their language and appearance were so inferior to the first young man, that it was quite a relief to Kate when he came up again. He offered his arm, and as the roads were very slippery and unpleasant, she was glad to accept it. The distance to Bracklebury appeared very

short, her companion made himself so agreeable ; his manners were most respectful, being those of a perfect gentleman, very different from what Kate had anticipated, judging from first impressions. The lady in the blue veil looked back more than once, and Kate overheard the words uttered, in rather a loud tone, of, " Very improper ! Highly reprehensible ! Forward minx ! Not to be tolerated !" Then blue-veil coughed in a very significant manner, and, turning her head completely round, made a sign to Kate to come and speak to her. But Kate by this time was getting quite fidgetty, and wondering if the words she had heard applied to herself, and as the lady's companions too had also turned round more than once to look at her, she determined to take no notice of any of them, and so looked steadfastly another way. Her new companion was so frank and pleasant, that gradually she became communicative in return, and before they reached the little town, they had become like old acquaintances, and he had said—" I hope I shall one day have the pleasure of renewing our acquaintance."

Then poor Kate felt very awkward, and would have looked foolish, had there been light enough to see her countenance. She did not know what to say, so was silent ; this was the second time during the first day that she had begun to feel the miseries of her new position. Perhaps her companion observed her confusion, for he immediately changed the subject, making some remarks on the surrounding country, which served for a topic, till they got to the inn. The lady and her brother arrived about the same time, and while the latter was making arrangements to hire a conveyance to take him and his sister to the vicarage, blue-veil pulled Kate aside.

“ I want your assistance to fasten my gown which has got torn,” she said ; “ besides you will be none the worse of a bit of advice.”

Had there been any other female near, to whom Kate could have gone for protection, she would not have followed blue-veil ; but she felt so confused amidst the noise and bustle, and was so lonely and unprotected, amongst so many men, that she gladly availed herself of the offer, and followed the lady up

stairs. They had no sooner entered an apartment, than blue-veil flinging herself on a chair, motioned to Kate to stand before her.

"Now, are you not ashamed of yourself?" she exclaimed; "or is your conduct the simple result of youth and inexperience? I should think *not*, for my part, since the innocent-looking ones are generally the deepest, when you come to know them!"

"May I ask what you mean, ma'am?" said Kate, in astonishment, her eyes flashing fire at this attack.

"I mean," said blue-veil, "that you, a young person, going in the capacity of attendant to Charteris hall, have been walking for the last hour with a younger son of the family, and if my ears have not deceived me, you have been doing your utmost to make yourself agreeable to Mr. Devereux Charteris, a young man ready enough, I'll be bound, to run after every new pretty face!"

Kate made no reply, she was so mortified at her own humiliating position, so indignant at the impertinence of blue-veil, so dissatisfied with herself, though indeed she had done

nothing of which really to be ashamed, and so completely overcome, that she sank on the chair beside her, and burst into tears. This seemed to mollify her companion a little, who, after watching her a minute or two, said—

“ Well, after all, I do believe you are a virtuous young person ; but, of course, a single woman who has a character to keep up, may be excused if she does form unwarrantable suspicions ! You are no more fit for a servant’s situation than my grey tom cat ! I am sorry to have hurt your feelings, though you know single women who retain such a youthful appearance as myself, require to be circumspect—yes, my dear, *uncommonly circumspect*, in their intercourse with the wicked world ! Pray use my smelling-bottle, and if you do go to Charteris-hall, walk circumspectly.”

Poor Kate scarcely listened to this speech, she was so occupied with her own thoughts ; but she was not long in recovering herself. Hastily drying her tears, she stood up, and rather baughtily inquired if she could be of any use in assisting the lady about her dress, as that was the object for which she had

come up stairs. Blue-veil would not be satisfied with this ; but insisted on making friends with her, and expressed her determination to see her safe from the inn. Kate told her that she expected some one to call for her, so they both went down stairs to inquire if any messenger had arrived.

Devereux Charteris was loitering about the landing place, evidently waiting for Kate, to whom he desired to say adieu, before driving home ; he also wished to tell her that her luggage would arrive in about half an hour. A handsome gig, with a fine spirited horse, was waiting for him at the inn door. Kate thanked him, and clung to blue-veil, who seized the occasion to interpose ; for she was anxious to let him know who the young person was with whom he had been walking, and also to speak her mind about his conduct in general. The truth was, she took an extraordinary interest in all his sayings and doings, and, for several years past, had been the plague of his life. He did not wait to hear what she had to tell him ; but cut it short, by saying,—

"I am sorry, Miss Mitten, I cannot stay to converse with you, as my horse is a spirited animal, and getting very impatient."

Miss Mitten looked savagely at Devereux, and drew Kate close to her, with an air of virtuous defiance. As he was turning away, after giving Miss Mitten a stiff bow, and making Kate a most deferential salutation, a countryman came up, and after touching his hat, addressed him as follows:—

"Please, sir, I've been sent from the hall to fetch the young woman as is coming for the nursery, one Kate Dukes I believe, but can get no account of her; so as your honour came by the coach, I make bold to ask if you've seen her; the gardener's spring-cart has been waiting for her this long time."

"Not I, faith!" said Devereux carelessly; "no one answering the description came by the coach, I'm sure!"

Poor Kate stepped forward, and turning her face away from Devereux, said timidly to the countryman, "I am Kate Dukes, and I shall be ready to go with you as soon as my trunk arrives."

“ Bless me !” exclaimed Devereux starting ; “ I had not an idea that you were going to the Hall. I’ll drive you over in my gig, and Bill may wait with his cart to fetch your trunk, The old lady did not say a word to me about getting another governess for the children.”

“ I am not going as governess, sir,” said poor Kate, “ I am going as the children’s maid ; had I known who you were, sir, I should have explained this at first to you, and I am very sorry if I have led you into any mistake by my manner of talking.”

The tears stood in Kate’s eyes, but she bit her lips, and looked firm and composed.

“ I’ll drive you in the gig, by Jove,” said Devereux, who seemed quite confounded ; “ I am sure there is no need of apology, any one seeing you must know you are a lady.”

“ I had rather go in the cart, sir,” said Kate, “ I should not like to enter your mother’s house, sir, in a manner unbecoming my situation.”

“ Yes, my dear, very well said,” interposed Miss Mitten, “ young females, like you and myself, never can be too cautious ; besides,

you must remember your situation, and the deference due to superiors."

Devereux did not wait to hear this little bit of morality from the circumspect Miss Mitten, but touching his hat respectfully to Kate, said "good night; of course you can do as you like best." He then walked to his gig, which he entered and drove off at a brisk pace, saying two or three times to himself on the road, "what a fine creature she is!"

CHAPTER V.

“Tis said that woman, prone to changing,
Is like the comet’s wandering light,
Eccentric, ominous, and bright ;
Trackless, and shifting as the wind :
A sea, whose fathom none can find ;
A moon, still changing and revolving,
A riddle, past all human solving.”

MOORE.

KATE arrived at Charteris Hall about eleven o’clock, and was received by the house-keeper, a stout florid personage that wore spectacles, and held her chin high in the air.

“So you are come at last, Kate Dukes !” said she, as she entered ; “you have kept me up an hour past my time ; for I always go to

bed at ten o'clock. What has become of you?"

Kate explained the cause of her detention, which seemed to satisfy Mrs. Brown, who rejoined,—

"Well, my dear, say no more about it, since I am kept out of my bed, it can't be helped! What will you take? There is cold meat and beer, or if you like better I can get you a cup of tea."

Kate declined taking any thing, but saying she was very tired, asked if she might go to bed. The housekeeper accordingly showed her up stairs, but warned her that she would have to change her sleeping apartment next day, as she must, henceforth, take up her quarters in a room adjoining the nursery, that she might be at hand to attend on the children.

"I don't fancy, Miss, that you have been used to work," said Mrs. Brown, as she laid down the candle, and stood in the middle of the room, surveying Kate from head to foot. "I do not think it! And bless me! I called you *Miss*! Well if ever! You are more

like a gentlewoman than a servant, that is if you had a better gown on! Well I must say I should never have engaged *you*, for I like servants that can work! However, Missus knows best! Was she acquainted with your family before, Kate Dukes?"

"No, Ma'am," replied Kate, colouring deeply.

"Well," continued the housekeeper, "it is a strange business altogether, and I wish good may come of it! You answered Missus' advertisement, did not you?"

"Mrs. Charteris was satisfied with the manner in which she heard of me," said Kate.

"And so," interrupted the housekeeper, "that is as much as to say, I have no business to inquire further. Very well, Miss, I can only say, that I wash my hands of the concern, and wish good may come of Missus interfering in her housekeeper's rights, and picking up a pinchbeck gentlewoman to fill a maid-servant's place, and that too by means of a newspaper! Well, well! And Mr. Devereux, too, Bill has been telling me, offered a seat in his gig to the maid!"

"I am sorry, Ma'am, to have given you offence," said poor Kate, "I am now entering into service for the first time, in order to ease my family of the burden of my maintenance. If in anything I do not act as becomes my situation, I shall receive any counsel from you very thankfully, for indeed I wish to do what is right."

"Well, well, my poor girl," replied Mrs. Brown, "say no more about it, only I thought you were meaning to come the lady over me. However, since you shew such a teachable spirit, I dare say we shall get on very well. But remember that Missus has engaged you, and not me ; so that I am not responsible !"

Mrs. Brown then said "good night," and left Kate to her own reflections, which were anything but agreeable, as she recalled the various mortifications to which she had been subjected, during the first day of her adopting a new character.

By seven o'clock next morning, Kate was dressed ; after saying her prayers, she sat down and read the sacred volume till she should be called. A little before eight, light

steps were heard running along the passage ; Kate could distinguish whispering, and children's suppressed laughter. Presently, tiny fingers tapped several times at her door, then another burst of laughter, and the little rogues ran away. She opened the door, but the children had hidden themselves. This little incident helped to rouse Kate's spirits, she was dotingly fond of children, and she thought to herself, "with them at least, I shall have no mortifications to undergo!" So she stationed herself close by the door, ready to jump out, should the same trick be repeated. She had not to wait long ; her quick ear soon detected the little feet advancing on tip-toe, and just as they tapped, she opened the door. Two little creatures, a boy and a girl stood before her ; but it was only an instant, for they tried to run away, as if they had been detected in a misdemeanour ; but Kate's merry eyes were twinkling with good humour all the time, and the children saw this, and laughed in their glee.

" Oh ! you merry rogues !" said Kate as she

caught them in her arms, and kissed them.

"Are you our new maid?" asked the little boy, looking up archly in Kate's face; "I like you very much."

"And so do I," said the little girl, "What is your name? I am called Eva, and he is Evan!"

"My name is Kate," replied she.

"Oh! capital!" cried the children, "we have a doll called Kate, but she is not a bit like you. Come and see our rooms."

So saying the children led her on, dancing and capering in their glee, and making a great noise. They showed her their play-room, and sleeping-room, with the little dressing-room adjoining, where she was in future to spend the night.

"You are to walk with us, and play with us, all day long, grandmamma says, when we are not at our lessons with Madame," exclaimed little Eva.

"Are you good at spinning tops?" inquired Evan in his turn.

"Oh! capital," replied Kate, "many a top

have I spun for my little brother ! But who is Madame ?”

“ Hush !” said Eva, “ here she comes.”

A very nice-looking little woman, who seemed between thirty and forty, now advanced. She was dressed in black, and had on a cap ; her black eyes were lively and piercing, her well cut mouth expressed sweetness and decision. At her first words, Kate perceived she was a foreigner ; but it was not difficult to discover that the natural liveliness of the Frenchwoman was subdued in a great measure by sorrow and suffering.

“ Well, *mes enfans* !” she exclaimed, as she approached, may I ask who this young person is, to whom you are talking ? But, I beg pardon, this young lady I should say,” added she, measuring Kate with a rapid glance from head to foot. “ I was told, Mademoiselle,” she continued, addressing Kate herself, “ that the children had gone in search of their new maid, and I was not aware till I beheld you, that Mrs. Charteris had a visitor last night.”

Then, bowing gracefully to Kate, she at-

tempted to lead the children away, saying "Have you seen your maid yet, my dears?"

"This is our maid, Madame! This is our maid!" exclaimed the children.

Madame de Beaurevoir turned once more to Kate, and looked inquiringly at her.

"Yes, Madame," said poor Kate, "I am the young person that was expected last night,—the children's maid."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Madame, in surprise, looking at Kate, who blushed deeply, and cast down her eyes. "However, I might have known who you are, from your dress," she continued, "which is very suitable, and quite *comme il faut* in your situation! Poor child! I dare say it is the first time you have left home? Is it not so?"

The tears came into Kate's eyes, and she could not speak.

"Oh! pray do not answer," exclaimed the kind-hearted Frenchwoman, "I would not vex you for a great deal! I know what it is to leave one's home, and eat the bread of strangers! However, you are very fortunate to have come here! There are very kind

people in this house, very kind indeed! I must have a chat with you by-and-by, when lessons are over. Meanwhile go and get breakfast."

Kate breakfasted in one of the children's apartments, at the table where they had partaken of their morning meal. Her solitude was only once interrupted by the housemaid, a ruddy, good-tempered girl, who came in to ask if she had got everything she wanted. When she had finished eating, she drew her chair to the window, and amused herself by looking out. The view embraced a wide expanse of country, bounded by distant hills. The house was on a gentle slope, in the midst of a beautiful park, ornamented with clumps of fine old trees. The sun was shining brightly, and notwithstanding the coldness of the season, a few birds were singing sweetly as Kate opened the window. The lovely prospect, and the fresh air, did her good; so her spirits began to revive. A light step was now heard coming along the passage, and a sweet voice singing a snatch from some opera; before the person reached the door

the air was changed into a line from the conclusion of a sorrowful ballad; but this also was broken off as the songstress entered the apartment.

“ Well! sitting at the window are you?” said a sharp and quick, but not unpleasant, voice. “ Fond of fresh air? That will please Mrs. Charteris! Very tired, eh? Seen the children? Nice little things, but troublesome. How do you like the place? Fine old house, is not it? What is your name? Oh! by-the-bye, Mrs. Charteris told me: Kitten, or Kate, is it? Do not be affronted, my dear,—Kates are always shrews, I would rather see you like a kitten. You are astonished, are you? Oh! it is my way. But you don’t know me yet. I’m a privileged person; may say what I like, and do what I like. I’m Miss Jones, but they call me Johnny,—not the servants, of course,—*you’ll* call me Miss Jones. However, I must say I like your look,—you are superior to the vulgar herd, no doubt.”

The lady, who was rattling on at this rate, to Kate’s great amusement, though she did

not dare to smile, was a middle-aged, or indeed almost elderly person, if one might judge from the crow-feet beginning to form about the corners of her eyes. But her long, luxuriant brown ringlets, unconfined by any cap; her short petticoats, exposing beautifully formed feet and ancles; her sprightly air, her youthful manner and rather fantastic dress, would have given the impression of quite a young woman. Her complexion was very sallow, her features tolerable, her rather wide mouth relieved by great white teeth, her face and head exceedingly small, and her whole figure remarkably slender. She was middle-sized, but walked with the air of a tragedy queen, and somehow or other passed for being much taller than she really was.

"Well, you are surprised, are you?" she continued. "We'll be good friends yet, no fear!—Pylades and Orestes—Pyramus and Thisbe! Don't you remember, Bottom, my dear? Not that I think you like Bottom! But what are you? Are you a dumbie? You are the children's new maid, are not you?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Kate, laughing and courtesying, "I am the children's maid, and I am not dumb; but you asked me so many questions, that I did not know which to answer first."

"Oh! that is it, is it? Well, you'll get to know me better in time, I hope, Miss Bottom. La! I did not mean to call you Bottom, but I was thinking of Pyramus and Thisbe; just what you and I will be if you turn out a nice girl! Then I'll ask you, after the children are gone to bed, to take chocolate in my room—I often drink it for supper. Do you take supper, or are you afraid of night-mare, that Hecate—that black eyed monster! La! you've got black eyes, I declare!—No—they are only dark blue—let me see—turn to the light! Well, I must be off. When one gets talking, one wastes so much time. I have a great deal of darning to do. Mrs. Charteris does not like any body but me to darn holes. That fellow Devereux, too, is always teasing me. Well, I'm off! Have you anything more to say? You are a great talker, I can see that already. 'Should not wonder if you were a Xantippe out and

out! Poor Socrates, what a life he must have led! Well, good-by—I'm off. I'll see you again, Kitten, in the course of the day." And so saying, Miss Jones departed, leaving the door open, and muttering to herself as she disappeared along the corridor, "Kitten, Kitten, Miss Bottom, Miss Bottom, Miss Kitten-Bottom!"

Kate laughed heartily at her new cognomen, and was wondering whether her last acquaintance was in her right senses or not; when she heard footsteps again approaching, and once more recognized Miss Jones' voice in accents of expostulation and entreaty.

"Come now, Devereux, don't be foolish! Why will you stick flowers in my hair? It is time to leave of these boyish tricks. The days are past when I could set you in a corner and put the fool's cap on you. Now, don't provoke me too far, or upon my word, I'll scratch!"

"Come, come, Johnny," said a voice which Kate well recognized, "don't get into a passion! You are exactly like a cat when you are roused. I am sure you are meditating an

assault! Come, kiss and be friends, I would not hurt you, Johnny."

"I dare say; but you are so rough, Devereux—you are the plague of my life—but I don't want your kisses, so you need not offer them. A man may not marry his grandmother, nor kiss her, either."

"But you are not my grandmother, Johnny."

"I'm older than your mother, at any rate," replied Miss Jones; "and as I was your governess once, I might as well have been your grandmother. Now go—there is a dear boy. Teach your grandmother to suck eggs! I am going to speak to Miss Bottom."

"Well Miss Kitten-Bottom," said Miss Jones, once more entering the room, "bad heels make work for the memory."

"My name, ma'am, is Kate Dukes," interrupted Kate, who could scarcely keep her gravity.

"Well, no matter what your name is, a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Last time I was here I forgot my errand. Mrs. Charteris wants to see you. Follow me and

I'll take you to her. Prithee, prithee, follow me! follow me to the green wood tree!"

Kate rose and accompanied Miss Jones; Devereux, in the mean time, had walked out of sight.

"Did you hear Devereux and me just now?" said Miss Jones; "that boy is the plague of my life! Did you know I was his grandmother? He is a dear delightful torment that gives me no peace when he is at home. Oh, the cares of maternity! I feel exactly like a hen with ducklings! But here is the room,—go in by yourself,—I'm not going to stay, for I have my holes to mend."

Miss Jones turned away, and warbling sweetly but wildly, hurried along the corridor. She looked back once and saw Kate hesitating, with her fingers on the handle of the door.

"Knock at the door, child," she cried out in her shrill voice. "Knock, and then wait till Mrs. Charteris replies, 'Pull the bobbin and the latch will go up.'"

Kate was too frightened to laugh at this very odd speech, and knocked gently on being

told to do so. A voice presently answered, "Come in," so Kate entered, making a low curtesy, after which she timidly stood at the door.

"Come forward, child, I want to look at you," said Mrs. Charteris, in whose presence she now found herself. Kate advanced, and looking up, beheld a tall and stately woman dressed in some rich black material, and seated in an arm-chair at a table, with a writing-desk before her. From the traces that still remained, she must have been eminently handsome. Her features were soft and regular, her countenance, when in repose, wore a haughty and almost stern expression ; but her smile which disclosed a row of little pearly teeth, a rare beauty at her age, was quite captivating in its sweetness.

"Come forward, child," she again repeated, as Kate stopped short at the distance of a few paces, "You must not be frightened ;" and here she smiled so sweetly as quite to reassure Kate. "I want to talk to you about my little folks, and to hear what you have to say for yourself. Were you much fatigued with

yesterday's journey? You were upset, I hear."

Kate blushed at the remembrance of yesterday, and of her intercourse with Mr. Devereux Charteris; but she would not have been so confused, had she known that the young man had never mentioned her name to his mother, who had learned the accident from her maid, to whom Bill had related it.

"I am not at all fatigued to-day, ma'am," she replied, "the upset frightened me a little, but I was not hurt."

"Is it the first time you have been from home?" asked Mrs. Charteris.

"Yes, ma'am, the first time," replied poor Kate, whose colour went and came, and who trembled so, she could hardly stand, being obliged to take hold of the back of a chair for support. Mrs. Charteris observed her agitation, and rising, went towards an inner room, saying as she left, "Sit down a few minutes till I return."

In about a quarter of an hour Mrs. Charteris came back, her countenance expressing mingled curiosity and kindness. Kate stood up, and she resumed the conversation.

“My grandchildren are delicate little creatures ; you have seen them this morning, I suppose ?”

Kate bowed.

“I was anxious to find an attendant for them,” continued the lady, “superior in education and manners to the ordinary class of servants ; and I trust that in you I shall find my wishes realized. At the same time, you must not be too fine to attend to all their personal wants, and I hope that you are sufficiently strong and healthy to romp with them and amuse them in the open air, at least half of every day.”

“I hope, ma’am, I may be able to meet your wishes in these respects ;” said Kate, “I have been accustomed to do these things for children all my life.”

“In some respects, you look as if you would suit my purpose very well,” said Mrs. Charteris, “but are you not too genteel to call yourself the children’s maid ? Would you not rather have been nursery governess, and had a servant under you ?”

Kate coloured again as she replied, “I do

not pretend to know enough to be a governess, unless for very young children; but I would rather be an attendant upon them, and never be obliged to appear in the drawing-room, where it would be difficult for me to define my place."

"Or rather where you would not choose to take the place which others might define for you," added Mrs. Charteris, looking through her with her piercing dark eyes, as if she quite understood what had been passing through her mind. "I like your sentiments in some respects," she continued, "but it remains to be proved, whether your pride will not interfere with your performance of all the duties of your station. You know you are to have no intercourse with the other servants,—no gossip!"

Kate involuntarily drew herself up.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Charteris, "your pride manifests itself already. I said so to try you, child! I hope you may suit me, for I like your appearance; but I have doubts, very great doubts indeed."

The tears came into Kate's eyes.

“Nay, do not cry, Kate, (is not Kate your name?) we shall make a trial of you.”

Kate dried her eyes, while Mrs. Charteris measured her from head to foot.

“Have you always been accustomed to wear these quakerish little caps, Kate?” she continued; “take off your cap, and let me see you without it.”

Kate did so, and Mrs. Charteris looked surprised, as she beheld the luxuriant hair and classically formed head and neck that were now displayed.

“Most extraordinary likeness,” she muttered to herself.

Kate winced under the scrutiny to which she was subjected, and it was quite a relief to her, when her mistress desired her to resume her cap, and began to question her anew.

“What was your father?—Mr. Redding did not state any particulars in his letter to me.”

Kate was about to reply, “a gentleman, ma’am,” but the words trembled on her lips, and were inaudible.

“I mean,” said her mistress, “what was

his occupation?—a farmer, a tradesman, or what?”

“He did nothing, ma’am,” replied Kate; “he had an annuity, or rather two small annuities, one of which ceased when he died.”

“So he was an idle man,” said Mrs. Charteris, with one of her stern looks; “I do not like that account at all. It is to be hoped you were brought up differently.”

“My mother was a farmer’s daughter,” said Kate, “and accustomed to household work, she taught me all that she knew herself.”

“So much the better,” resumed Mrs. Charteris, evidently softening. “By the way, Mr. Redding’s letter bore the post-mark of Edmonstone, though it was dated Springvale. Did you live near the parish of Everingham?”

“In that parish, ma’am,” said Kate who was getting frightened at such minute inquiries.

“Then you have seen the Manor House, where a family of the name of Devereux reside?”

"Yes, ma'am," replied Kate faintly, for she felt like to drop with confusion.

"What do you mean, girl?" exclaimed Mrs. Charteris in a severe tone; "have you anything to be ashamed of? I hope no love affair? The Devereux have good blood in their veins; however, after the father's example, it cannot be wondered at, if one of the boys thought of you! Tell the truth, child, I insist upon knowing all."

"O, forgive me, forgive me, Mrs. Charteris!" exclaimed Kate, in the agitation of the moment, throwing herself on her knees.

"Stand up, child! that is an unbecoming posture, except to your Maker! stand up, and tell the truth."

"God forbid that I should deceive you, madam," said Kate, rising with dignity. "I am the eldest daughter of the late Mr. Devereux; since my father's death, my mother has scarcely been able to support us all, and I determined to lighten her burden, by going into service."

"Why not a governess, child? why not a

governess?" interrupted Mrs. Charteris, in an agitated tone.

"I thought a situation, such as yours, ma'am, where I should be quite unknown, would be less mortifying to my pride! But my mother thought I was very foolish, and I had difficulty in obtaining her consent."

"But why this concealment, Kate? Why did Mr. Redding not call you by your real name? I am shocked and hurt at this duplicity."

"O, do not say so, madam!" exclaimed poor Kate, in broken accents. "I was obliged to do something for myself! I tried to get a situation as governess, but could not find anything to suit me. Then I read your advertisement, and liked the description of this situation far better than anything I had ever thought of before. I was so happy to come! But how could I do so, under my own name! The memory of my father forbade! Forgive me, madam, I entreat you; I did not mean to deceive you, except in concealing that I was a gentleman's daughter."

“ Well, Kate Devereux, you are a singular person !” said Mrs. Charteris ; “ however, you may now sit down till I inquire a little farther into this matter. I desire you will begin at the beginning, and relate to me all you know about your father’s family, as well as your own particular history.”

Kate dried her eyes, and prepared to obey, when she was interrupted by the entrance of a tall, handsome man, who, scarcely deigning to look at her, advanced towards Mrs. Charteris, and in a languid and indifferent, though supercilious tone, thus addressed her :

“ Mother, give me a cheque for three hundred pounds ; I set off for town this evening.”

Mrs. Charteris started, and bit her lips. “ To town, Lionel !” she exclaimed ; “ surely this is a sudden idea.” Have you forgotten that Alicia Forster will be here to-morrow ? How long do you purpose staying in London ?

“ ‘ Can’t say,’ replied her son, in the same cold supercilious accents. “ I knew Alicia was coming ; but that makes no difference in my arrangements.”

"Then you *shall not* have the money!" said Mrs. Charteris, turning pale, and speaking very slowly and distinctly, as she always did when angry.

"No consequence, mother dear;" said Lionel, languidly, "I can go to London all the same, and get what I want from the Jews."

"Leave the room instantly, Kate!" exclaimed Mrs. Charteris, in a voice which made the poor girl tremble; "this is no scene for you."

Kate hastened from the apartment, and got out into the corridor, but here she was quite bewildered by the numerous doors, and did not know which to open to make her escape. She tried several without success, some leading into bedrooms, some into other passages. At last she sat down on a chair, near one of the landing-places, to wait until she saw some one that might direct her to the children's apartments. It was near an open window, and soon she heard the voices of persons who appeared to be walking up and down beneath it. Hoping it might be some of the domestics,

she went to look, but drew back immediately on recognizing Devereux and Miss Jones. Unless she returned to the corridor leading into Mrs. Charteris' apartments, where she was liable to overhear the altercation between that lady and her son, she could not escape, so she was obliged to remain stationary, at the risk of playing the part of eavesdropper.

"So Lionel is gone to speak to his mother, Devereux!" said Miss Jones. "He has ordered horses to start for London this afternoon! Poor ~~A~~Alicia! She will be a Niobe to-morrow! Why don't *you* console her, Devereux? I wish *you* had her! Such a nice couple! Such lots of money! What do you say now? And I'll come, and teach the children, and darn all your holes!"

"A tempting offer, Johnny!" replied Devereux, laughing; "but it won't do! She likes Lionel; besides, Lionel is fond of her, whatever he may pretend to the contrary, in order to tease my mother!"

"Well, more fool she!" said Miss Jones; "you are the best of the two! Both bad, though! Don't suppose I meant to compli-

ment you! One is the saucepan, and the other the fire! Poor choice between you! I wish Alicia well through the toils of matrimony! Better with you than Lionel! Better a monkey than a bear! Better single blessedness than either! The apostle Paul was a wise man!"

"Come, come, Johnny, don't turn a Dr. Johnson! You are becoming such a moralizer, there is no living with you! Have you seen the children's new maid?"

"Seen her! Why yes! Pyramus and Thisbe! Bottom! Kittenbottom! Yes, Miss Kittenbottom, to be sure!"

"What do you mean? That is not her name," said Devereux, laughing.

"I choose to call her so," replied Miss Jones, "because she tickled my fancy, and is such a talker, such an inveterate talker,—like silver bells and cockle shells and pretty maids all in a row!"

"Come be reasonable, Johnny," said Devereux, "I want seriously to speak about her. She seems a nice girl, she came in the same coach with me yesterday. Poor thing! I

have taken an interest in her, Johnny. She seems very quiet and well-conducted, and I am convinced has seen better days. She has quite the manners of a gentlewoman."

"So she has!" replied Miss Jones, "she may prove another Pamela; eh! Devereux?"

"Now, Johnny, a truce with your nonsense!" interrupted the young man; "I mean to have little or no intercourse with her. It will be better so, for all parties; but I only mention her to bespeak your kindness for her, Johnny. Talk to her sometimes, and speak to her of home; for she will be very lonely here at first!"

Kate heard no more, for she got up hastily and shut the window, only regretting that she had not thought of doing so before.

"Oh, yes! you may trust me!" exclaimed Miss Jones; "my heart beats kindly for man, beast, and feathered fowl! From the old canary down to you, Devereux! Never fear, I'll not forget, Miss Bottom! Who shut that window just now? La! I'll go and see! Mrs. Charteris will be angry if it be not left open!"

A minute or two elapsed before Miss Jones

entered the corridor where Kate was sitting.

"So! you are here, Miss Bottom!" she exclaimed. "Have you been exploring the wonders of this enchanted mansion, and looking out for dragons? No dragons here but Devereux, long legged darling that he is! I call him my son, Miss Bottom, and my long legged darling. But, bless me! what a colour you have got! Celestial rosy red! I thought you had been pale, child. You are a perfect chameleon! Pity you can't catch flies like your brethren! then you might catch flies for Dicky! Don't you know who Dicky is? My other son.—Come, and I'll show him to you."

Kate followed, too bewildered and excited to appreciate the oddity of Miss Jones' conversation; the latter conducted her up several flights of stairs, till they reached the garret.

"Now do not be astonished at mounting so high," said Miss Jones; "we must climb to reach Parnassus, you know! I prefer this place to all the rooms in the house put together! See what a prospect!" and she led Kate to the window. "Here I am a veritable

Robinson Crusoe, monarch of all I survey, in imagination at least."

The view was certainly superb, embracing lovely park scenery, wood, water, and mountains. Kate no longer wondered at Miss Jones' taste in choosing her apartment, and said so to her,—

"Oh! I pride myself on my taste," said Miss Jones, and not the less because, in most things, it is singular. Here you have a bird's eye view of a vast tract of country. Well, how droll! Bird's eye! I said 'bird's eye!' I have actually made a pun! But you are obtuse, cloudy, misty in your ideas! You don't understand! Well, you will presently, when you see Dicky! 'Bird's eye!' Capital! You knew I was a mother, did not you? I told you so before! Two boys, the joy of their old parent's heart, Devereux and Dicky! I am afraid Dicky is sleeping, he is so quiet. Hush! don't chatter on so! we must not wake him!"

Kate looked round the apartment, which was very lightly and tastefully furnished, but she could see no traces of the presence of any

other human being. Just then a faint chirp was heard from behind the window-curtain.

"Oh! my love, my beauty, my darling! Dicky, my treasure!" exclaimed Miss Jones, rushing to the place whence the noise proceeded, and uncovering a bird-cage, in which was seated a stupid-looking old canary, that hopped towards her finger as she held it out.

"This is Dicky, my other son, Miss Bottom;" said she, "and it is chiefly on his account that I live so high up, for at his age he requires clear and rarified air. This is our Parnassus, Dicky, our Parnassus; and there is your Helicon, my love," she continued, pointing to the water-jug. "He understands every thing I say to him, I assure you, Miss Bottom! Quite an intelligent being! Has as much a soul as either you or I! Don't suppose I am a Mahometan, Miss Bottom; I believe women have souls, greater souls than men very often! But I believe Dicky has a soul too! He is of the masculine gender, Miss Bottom; but a spinster like myself!"

Kate began to laugh, and indeed it was strange she had not done so sooner.

"Oh! Titillated are you? You mean to be witty, do you? All the world laughs at me; but no matter."

Here Miss Jones was interrupted by a servant who, after knocking at the door, came in breathless, saying,—

"Oh, Miss Jones, what have you done? Given me such a chase! Here have I been looking for the last ten minutes for the young person that came last night. Missus wants her. Make haste, Miss. This way, please," she continued, turning to Kate. "Missus will be so angry at being kept waiting, She must be served to the minute. Mind you say to her that Miss Jones did it; for *she* may do any thing."

"Good-by, Miss Kitten-Bottom," cried Miss Jones after her. "You are always welcome when you have a spare minute to come to Parnassus and talk with Dicky."

When Kate again entered Mrs. Charteris' sitting-room, she found that lady apparently quite tranquil, but her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were glistening.

"You may sit down, Kate Devereux," she

said ; then after pausing a moment, during which Kate was again subjected to a close scrutiny, she added, "Commence your story."

Kate felt very nervous, but did her best to give a clear and concise recital. Once or twice, notwithstanding, Mrs. Charteris interrupted her to cut her short, when she thought her too prolix ; but when she had finished, she observed,—

"I like your sentiments, Kate, and approve of your wish to maintain yourself, so as no longer to burden your mother. But what do you mean to do now?"

Kate looked up in surprise, and then answered, "Whatever you please, ma'am."

"It is not what I please," said Mrs. Charteris ; "I have nothing to do with it. You do not suppose you can stay here."

Kate turned pale, and looked up with such a sad, tearful, supplicating expression at Mrs. Charteris, that even *she* was touched.

"What am I to do with you, girl?" she continued, "I do not want a nursery-governess while I have Madame de Beaurevoir ; besides, I do not choose to have a poor young lady in

the house, considering the nature of my domestic circle. No, I want a superior servant,—a farmer's daughter, for my grandchildren's maid."

"I beg your pardon, madam," said poor Kate, who felt that it was necessary to exert herself, and say something, lest she might not again have so favourable an opportunity ; "I am a farmer's granddaughter, and used to work. O let me stay with you, and forget that I was ever anything better. Let me be plain Kate Dukes, and you shall see how I can conform to my situation."

Mrs. Charteris again gave her one of her sharp, scrutinizing glances, as if she would read through her soul, and after a moment's pause, replied, "You may stay out your month, Kate Dukes,—for Kate Dukes you shall be. After that, if I am pleased with your humility and prudence, I will befriend you, but in what way I cannot yet say. You may go now."

Kate thanked her, then rose, curtesied, and was leaving the room, when Mrs. Charteris desired her to ring the bell, and wait till the

page showed her the way to the children's apartments. She then said to her,—

“Remember, you must tell no one who you are; and avoid talking about yourself as much as possible.”

CHAPTER VI.

“ If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you’ll forget them all.”
The Rape of the Lock.

KATE found the children waiting for her, ready dressed in their out of door habiliments.

“ We have waited such a time for you !” they exclaimed. “ Madame let us out of school half an hour earlier on purpose, for we have a great many things to show you !”

“ Do you like riding on a donkey, trundling a hoop, or playing marbles best ?” asked Evan.

“Or shall we take the doll to walk, and play at ladies?” said Eva.

“I think we had better take a walk,” said Kate, “and then you can show me all round this fine place.”

“Very well,” cried the children, and they scampered off before her, so that she was obliged to run, to keep up with them. Thus they traversed all the back premises and the various offices. As they were about to enter the poultry-yard, for the children insisted upon showing Kate everything, Evan stopped short, and looking up with a mysterious expression, asked her, in a low voice,—

“Are you a hero? For I admire heroes, and I have been reading to-day with madame about Richard Cœur de Lion, and I should wish you to be like him.”

“But what good would it do you,” asked Kate, laughing, “to have Richard Cœur de Lion for your maid?”

“Oh! great good,” said Evan, who, with his sister, still hesitated at the door of the poultry-yard; “for if you had a lion-heart like Richard, you would not object to go in

there, and face the great, big, black turkey cock, that keeps all the yard in order. Now, what say you? Will you go? He'll only jump on your back, and peck at your bonnet, and Eva and I can wait outside, and peep in to see how you get on!"

Kate was much amused at this proposal, but declined the honour, to the great disappointment of the children.

"Well, you shall ride my donkey, and I shall make him kick," said Evan; "and then we shall see how well you can stick on."

"But that will be very rough play," said Kate, "does your grandmamma like you to play so roughly?"

"O yes!" said Eva, "grandmamma wishes us to romp a great deal and become very strong, for she thinks that having come from India, we are naturally too delicate! and Madame would not take in hand to do all grandmamma wished, and that is why we got you."

Kate was half amused, half frightened, at hearing what was expected from her, and said that she should be very happy, to walk along-

side of Evan when he was riding, but that she herself would not promise to mount.

"Then," said Evan, "I can plainly see that you have not been taught like the ancient Persians. I was hoping that you could bring me up like Cyrus, when I am out of school!"

"To ride on horseback, shoot with the bow, and speak the truth! Is that what you mean?" replied Kate.

"Yes," said Evan, "and I am glad that you have read the story, for we can talk about it, at any rate."

Kate was amused, and saw plainly that she had got an original to deal with. "How long is it since you returned from India?" she inquired as they pursued their walk.

"About a twelve-month," said Eva, "and we came in the same ship with such a queer man!"

"Don't call him a man," said Evan, "he was an ogre! I thought at first that he ate little children; but now I have got more sense! One day he threw a plate at his black servant, and it hit him just above the eye, and, oh! how it bled! I saw it, and I went up to him,

and shook my fist at him, and said, 'You are a monster! A wicked giant! An old Blue Beard!' And then I began to cry, for I was frightened; but instead of being angry, he began to laugh, and said, 'Bravo! little man! I like that!' and then he gave me a beautiful box, all inlaid with ivory, which I'll show you when we get home. He was very good to me after that day. So now we have called our black donkey after him. There it is, Kate, feeding in that field. Come, let us go to it!' .

And so saying, the children scampered towards it, leaving Kate to follow, shouting at the pitch of their voices, "Hoozoor Sydajee!" to her no small astonishment. In two minutes they had climbed the hedge, and got down into the field; so Kate had either to follow their example, or stay behind, for the gate which she examined in passing was locked. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to climb; but what was her mortification, when, just as she got on the top of the hedge, Devereux made his appearance. She hastily jumped down, before he could reach her, to offer his assist-

ance which he seemed to wish to do, and then she rejoined the children.

"Oh! Uncle Devereux!" cried the two madcaps, running towards him. "Do place Kate on the back of Hoozoor Sydajee, and make him kick; it will be such glorious fun!"

"I am afraid you find my little nephew and niece very wild," said Devereux to Kate, as he advanced. "It is a whim of my lady-mother's that they should be so." And then he continued, in a low voice, so that the children should not hear, "My poor sister, their deceased mother, died of consumption, and Mrs. Charteris fancies that she will be able to eradicate any lurking seeds of that malady by keeping them a great deal in the open air, and encouraging them to romp and run about as much as possible."

"I hope her efforts may succeed, sir," was all the reply that Kate could make; she blushed, as much at the remembrance of what had passed the previous evening, as at the awkward position in which Devereux had just seen her.

"Come, come, Uncle Dev! Put her on

Hoozoor's back!" cried the children. But Devereux did not prove himself compliant; on the contrary, he told them he was very busy, and could not stay; so, touching his hat to Kate, whom he still seemed to consider as a gentlewoman, he walked away; while she felt quite mortified and annoyed with herself, for displaying so much confusion.

The children next set Kate to fly a kite for them, an accomplishment of which she acquitted herself to their entire satisfaction; having been accustomed to do it for her little brother.

"If you do as well every day," said Evan, at last, "I shall speak to my grandmamma about marrying you when I come of age. I thought of Madame once, but she does not please me so well as you; for she can neither fly kites nor play at marbles."

The little party were now summoned in to dinner, and Kate employed herself with her needle till the children had finished; then she partook of her own meal while they amused themselves in another room with Madame. Presently Mrs. Charteris sent for them, and

she was told to escort them to their grand-mamma's sitting-room. When at last she was once more comfortably seated at her work, Madame entered. She rose at her approach but was told to be seated, while the French woman sat down beside her.

"You are very young to leave home my dear," said she ; "is it the first time you have done so ?"

Kate replied in the affirmative.

"Tell me about your family and your home, for I love to hear of happy homes, and I am sure from your sunny face, that yours has been so," continued the kind-hearted French woman. "I, too, once had a happy home, which I was obliged to leave ; but I do not despair ; I look forward to brighter days when I can rejoin my children." Madame sighed, and wiped a tear from her eyes, then taking hold of one of Kate's hands, she pressed it, and said, "Talk to me of your family, it will be balm and consolation for both ; for me to hear, and for you to relate."

Kate felt quite put out by this unexpected address ; in any other circumstances, she would

have been delighted to meet with so much sympathy from a person whose appearance was so singularly prepossessing ; but at the present juncture it was very awkward, and she did not know how to answer ; so she hesitated, stammered, blushed, and at last said,—

“ I feel deeply grateful, Madame, for your exceeding kindness in showing me so much sympathy. I should like very much to talk with you quite openly. It would, indeed, be a great pleasure to me. But—but—but I am afraid, dear Madame, that Mrs. Charteris would be displeased. She made me tell her every thing—every thing without reserve this morning ; and now she wishes me to say no more about it to any one. Believe me I could not do so without being dishonorable.”

Poor Kate felt like to choke as she said this, for it was evident from Madame's face that she was both surprised and hurt at her reply. The shade that clouded her countenance, however, was only transient.

“ Say no more, Kate,” she replied, smiling once more, “ of course both you and I must respect the wishes of Mrs. Charteris. What do

you think of my two little pupils? Is not Evan an original?"

Kate, who was delighted to change the subject, said she had been very much amused with him.

"Both the children are very engaging," said Madame. "I love instructing my pupils, for it recalls to me the happy hours I used to spend with my own little girls."

Kate looked sympathizing, and wondered if these little girls were still living; but she did not like to ask. Madame guessed her thoughts, and replied to them:—

"My daughters are at school with some pious nuns in Paris. They are well taken care of, and I can never thank these dear nuns enough for their charity! I am here in England, making money for my children! If I can save enough by the time their education is finished, we shall all live together again! Oh! happy, happy day!" Poor Madame stopped short, and wiped her eyes.

Kate asked, "Do you often hear from your daughters, Madame?"

"Very often," she replied; a good priest,

an old acquaintance of mine, the Abbé de Dillon, conveys our letters for us. He sometimes pays me a visit here, too, as Mrs. Charteris is very liberal in her sentiments,—and then I hear all about my dear children, for he always goes to see them when he is in Paris.”

Kate’s heart beat quickly at the name of the Abbé de Dillon, and she wondered if Madame’s daughters were at the same school with Annie. She ventured to ask what was the name of the convent, and felt a thrill of pleasure, when Madame replied, “The Sacré Cœur.”

“You have heard that name before!” said the quick-sighted Frenchwomen, who had been reading Kate’s face. “However, I shall ask you no questions, so do not be afraid. It is a very nice convent; one perfectly *comme il faut*. None but the higher ranks go to it. A poor governess, like myself, could not afford to send her daughters there, unassisted; but we have friends, very kind friends, among the nuns.”

When Kate saw that Madame had too much delicacy to harass her with awkward

questions, she ventured to make many inquiries about the *Sacré Cœur*, and all she heard gave her great consolation on Annie's account. The conversation, in this manner, passed very agreeably, till the children returned.

The family circle at Mrs. Charteris's dinner-table consisted of herself, Lionel, who had altered his determination of going to town, Devereux, and Miss Jones. Madame did not generally dine with them, as she took most of her meals with the children. While dinner lasted, Mrs. Charteris looked anxious and pre-occupied. Lionel was sulky, and scarcely opened his lips, even to reply when he was addressed; but Devereux and Miss Jones kept up an incessant rattle of talking and laughter, unmoved by the gloom of the others.

"What have you been doing with yourself, since I saw you Johnny?" asked Devereux.

"Reading Johnson's dictionary," replied Miss Jones with pomposity; "I have got as far as the letter C."

"You don't mean to say that you read it straight on!" exclaimed Devereux laughing.

"Of course I do," replied Miss Jones in her quick, snappish way, tossing her head; "I do not know any other book, that gives such a variety of information, and embraces so many subjects! I am always coming upon new words, that I did not know before. And so would you, too, if you were to read it more! Now can you tell me the meaning of 'bifidated'?"

"Of what Johnny?" said Devereux.

"Why of 'bifidated' to be sure! No, I am sure you cannot! It means 'opening with a cleft,' and comes from *bifidus*, Latin."

"How very learned you are become all at once, Johnny!" said Devereux, laughing; "my poor brains cannot stand in competition with yours, for a moment."

"I dare say not," said Miss Jones, looking proud; "for you ought to have been kept much longer at your spelling! If ever I have children to bring up again, I shall attend to their spelling more, as well as to their colons and semi-colons! There is not a book fit to read now-a-days, for the colons are all placed wrong! Now I should say to every author about to publish, 'mind your semi-colons,

periods will take care of themselves ! ” There was silence for a minute, and then Miss Jones continued in an audible whisper to Devereux : “ Why might this party be called an Ursa-line community ? Do you give it up ? Because Ursa Major,” she continued nodding her head towards Lionel, who was looking very sullen, “ sits at the head of it ! ”

“ Miss Jones, I beg you will remember at whose table you are sitting,” said Lionel, who had overheard the remark, looking very grand.

“ I beg your pardon Mr. Charteris,” said Miss Jones, with an imperturbable countenance ; “ but I thought I was a privileged person ! I presume too much upon a certain *feline* prerogative. ‘ Cats may look . . . ! ’ You know the rest. Many a time have I been termed an old cat ! *Genus feline !* Community of the pantiles ! Caterwauling ! Moonlight nights ! Enemies of Dicky ! ”

“ Insufferable stuff ! ” growled Lionel in a tone which silenced poor Miss Jones, as far as he was concerned, during the remainder of the dinner. Mrs. Charteris now and then addressed her sons, but the conversation was

principally kept up by Devereux, for Lionel seldom condescended to reply. It was quite a relief to all parties, when the ladies rose and left the two gentlemen to their wine. Silence between the latter continued for some minutes, till at last, Devereux exclaimed, "Well! I must say this is very dull!"

"What is dull?" said Lionel, starting from his reverie, and looking up with one of those sweet, bright smiles, which so rarely relieved the nature of his countenance, but which he inherited from his mother, whom he resembled in many particulars.

"So you have been thinking me very dull," he continued; "but how could it be otherwise, while *she* was here! Now I can breathe, for my incubus is gone."

"O Lionel!" exclaimed Devereux; "it grieves me to hear you speak in such a manner; is she not the kindest, the most indulgent of mothers?"

"Yes, you find her so, I dare say," replied Lionel; "notwithstanding having tried her patience pretty well with your extravagance. However, don't frown, Devereux. I did not

mean at all to reflect upon you. Liberty! liberty, I say, for ever! I only meant that she is a very kind and indulgent mother to a son, that, whatever his conduct in other respects may be, manages in certain particulars to fall in with her humours. I approve very much of your doing so, Devereux,—very much indeed. But *I* cannot. *I* am made of sterner stuff. *You* are so full of life and spirits,—so frank and jovial,—so easy and good-natured, that your amiability prompts you, when you are at home,—which, by the way, is not very often,—to do whatever she asks you,—to suit yourself to all her whims. It is no trouble to you; it comes so natural for you to try to please. But I, on the contrary, have a strong leaven of her own wilful nature about me. I love to contradict. I will not be led. It is enough for her to express any wish to make me choose to do the opposite. Where she loves, I am inclined to detest; what she dislikes and avoids, I like to favour. Nay, the wisest and best plans she forms for me, which my own judgment unwillingly confesses are good, become distorted through my imagina-

nation. There is a perpetual conflict raging within me. I kick against the traces, and am miserable because my lady-mother holds the reins."

"So I see, Lionel, and I am very sorry for it," replied Devereux; "I wish my mother would make you a proper allowance at once out of the estate, and let you go elsewhere, and spend it as you like."

"She ought,—she certainly ought," said Lionel, musing; "But she is too fond of money, and too fond of power. Yes, the love of power is the key to my mother's character. By heavens! it makes my blood boil to think of all my poor father must have suffered. That woman! Words cannot tell what I feel."

"You do our mother injustice," said Devereux, anxious to break the current of Lionel's thoughts; "I believe that, notwithstanding a few failings, she is sincerely anxious for the good of her children. Now, supposing you marry Alicia, which is what the old lady has set her heart upon, I have not the slightest doubt that she will make over to you a con-

siderable portion of her income, during her life-time, besides guaranteeing to you and your heirs the reversion of the Charteris estate. Indeed, I know this is her intention, for she told me so."

"Let her keep Charteris Hall for those who will be grateful for her bounty," exclaimed Lionel; "I am not going to purchase my rightful inheritance at the price of my liberty. Please my mother, forsooth, by marrying the woman of her choice, and then be rewarded, for my complaisance, by a free gift of the reversion of my own inheritance! It is rich, certainly!"

"But why won't you marry Alicia?" asked Devereux, "I thought you used to like her."

"I liked the child," said Lionel, "as long as there was no talk of marriage,—while she was a gay, artless, happy school-girl, here for the holidays! Indeed I never saw a prettier or more bewitching little creature. I often asked her then, in jest, to be my wife, and the idea seemed to please the little thing amazingly. Had I been let alone, I do believe she might still have been reigning in my heart;

for I may safely affirm to you, that I never gave my affections to any one, during all my wanderings on the Continent."

"Well! why in the name of common sense," said Devereux, "do you find anything disagreeable in trying to love her now? At any rate, see her, and give your mother's wishes a fair chance."

"It is all very well for you to say so," said Lionel, "but I have not told you all. I was abroad, as you know, nearly four years, and during the first part of that time, the image of Alicia was never absent from my heart. Well! a year before my return, what does my mother do, but write me a long letter upon Alicia's hopes and prospects; 'Her uncle's death had made her a great heiress! It was the wish of our mutual friends that we should be united! Alicia herself still remembered me!' Indeed, my mother whispered, that the foolish little thing 'had never forgotten her childish fancy, and was really attached to me, for she had it from the best authority!' Could you imagine anything more provoking? Had the progress of events been let alone, there is

no saying what might have happened; but here mother must interfere and spoil all."

"You are to be pitied, Lionel, very much to be pitied," said Devereux, laughing; "an amiable and beautiful heiress, supposed to be fondly attached to you, and you cruelly compelled to marry her!"

"You mistake the thing, Devereux," said Lionel, "I am not compelled to marry her; I have promised to stay to see her, but marry her I never shall."

"It would be almost better," said Devereux, "since that is your firm determination, for you to go at once."

"No, I shall stay at home a week," said Lionel. "Mother has bought this concession very dearly,—at the price of the great Long-stoke-farm, which she has promised to make over to me in perpetuity without further delay. That will be a clear five hundred a-year, in addition to the two hundred a-year left me by my father."

"Then you will be free and independent," said Devereux, "with seven hundred a year! What in the world makes you look so savage

at our poor mother, after such liberality !”

“Liberality, do you call it?” said Lionel, with a sneer, “pretty liberality ! If I do not marry Alicia after that, I do not suppose I shall ever get any more. However one thing consoles me, that *you* will have Charteris Hall ; for the old lady loves you too well to disinherit you for any of her crotchets !”

“Lionel,” said Devereux, colouring, “you are unjust both to me, and to my mother. She has too high a sense of duty, and also too much affection for her children, to disinherit one, because he will not form a matrimonial tie which is repugnant to him. And your brother, Lionel, has too much love for you, and too high a sense of honour, to consent to be enriched at your expense, if it were possible that such an unworthy offer could be made to him.”

“Forgive me, Devereux !” said Lionel, touched by his generous language, and getting up hastily, he embraced him ; “I know well your kind nature, Devereux, and I did you injustice, but not so to my mother ! Believe

me," he continued, after sitting down again, "I would not marry an angel even, if presented to me by *that woman*! But,—have *you* lately seen Alicia, Devereux? What do you think of her?"

"Think of her!" said Devereux, "that she is the prettiest, dearest, most fascinating little creature! Exactly my *beau idéal* of a sister-in-law! I saw her a few months ago, just before you came home."

"Why don't *you* pay your addresses to her, then?" said Lionel, laughing, "I should be delighted if you could carry off the prize! And it would release me from a very unpleasant predicament!"

"No, Lionel, that plan would never do," said Devereux, with a sigh; "she does not care the least about me! Besides our characters are too much alike. There is not sufficient contrast between us. I want a more decided character, whose firmness might neutralize my too great pliability."

"Well, Devereux, I did not give you credit for analyzing so truly your own disposition. But you are a generous, kind-hearted brother,


and whatever betide, I shall always feel confidence in your sterling honour and affection."

While her sons were thus conversing, Mrs. Charteris was walking up and down her usual sitting-room, absorbed in thought. She was much annoyed with her eldest son's obstinacy, and determined opposition to all, even her slightest wishes. It was gradually becoming more and more evident to her, that she had not only his self-willed and contradictory nature to contend with, but also a rooted dislike to herself.

"God pity me!" she exclaimed, in the agony of her heart; "for which of my sins art thou punishing me, Great Being, in this terrible manner, by robbing me of the affections of my first-born! What have I done? What can I undo? Oh, great God, assist me! and give me the spirit of wisdom to guide me in this matter!"

Mrs. Charteris continued to pace up and down the apartment, wringing her hands,—every now and then uttering an ejaculation, and betraying an emotion which was rare with

her, and which few or none had ever witnessed. Her brows were contracted, her lips compressed, and more than once, a big tear-drop stole down her cheeks. Suddenly she stopped short, and resting her head for support on the back of her great arm-chair,—“I know it,” she exclaimed, “my pride must be humbled. I have gloried too much in my riches, my abilities, my influence over the minds and fortunes of my neighbours, friends, and dependents; yes, and over my own sons, too. To cure the evil, I must strike at the root. Do I love power? Yes, I am greedy, insatiable! I would have both power, absolute power, and undivided affection. But it will not do. I am getting old, now. What is power to an old woman? I must have affection,—I must win my sons’ hearts. Devereux I have already,—but then he is so amiable, and I have never tried him. I *must* ask Lionel,—gain him,—make him mine; I must soften towards him,—conquer him by kindness, and stop my own proud spirit. Why should a mother be proud? It is monstrous, unnatural! A mother’s heart should be all softness. O God,



help me to do my duty towards both my children !”

Mrs. Charteris was still in a reverie, when she was startled by a light tap at the door of the apartment. She called “come in,” and the page entered, bringing a letter which had just arrived by post. It was from Alicia, who informed her that she should arrive, accompanied by her maid, at Bracklebury, early on the following day, and should be much obliged if she would allow Madame to come for her in the carriage, as she wished to have a long chat with her before reaching the hall.

“What can the girl have to say to Madame ?” said Mrs. Charteris to herself ; “however if she wishes it, let it be so. It may be useful.” Then rising, she rung the bell, and desired Madame de Beaurevoir might be told that she wished to speak to her. That lady soon made her appearance, and she told her of Alicia’s wish.

“I shall be so glad, so charmed, to see dear Mademoiselle Alicia.” exclaimed Madame ; “It is very kind of her to think of me.”

“I am glad you are going to see her first,”

said Mrs. Charteris, motioning her to a chair, "because I think it may be in your power to do her a great kindness." Madame looked all attention, while the old lady continued,—“I do not know how far you may be in Alicia’s confidence; but I suspect you understand her sentiments better than I do.”

Madame bowed, and Mrs. Charteris went on, “I know she is attached to you, and that you have influence with her. Now, I want you to prepare her mind for disappointment with regard to Lionel; for I do not see the slightest chance of his becoming her lover, and I am only sorry if I, or any of her other friends, ever put such a thing into her head. Do you suppose, Madame, that the silly little thing has set her heart upon it?”

“It would be difficult to say,” replied Madame, cautiously; “but since circumstances are as you describe, madam, is it not a great pity for Alicia to come here at all?”

“It is a pity,” said Mrs. Charteris; “but it cannot be helped now, for it is too late to avoid it. I was not aware of the state of the case till I conversed with Lionel to-day. He has so

carefully, and in such a provoking manner, avoided talking with me on any subject since his return from the continent, that it was by mere accident I became acquainted with his real sentiments regarding poor Alicia."

"Would it not be better, then, madam," suggested Madame de Beaurevoir, "that Mr. Lionel should leave the hall before Miss Alicia arrives. Could you not suggest to him to go to London? He talked this morning, I am told, of doing so."

"And I prevented it, Madame," said Mrs. Charteris, sternly. "He has promised me to remain here a week, and at least to see Alicia. The foolish little thing may be forewarned by you to expect nothing from Lionel. Surely she is not so weak as to be the worse of seeing him. Besides, I choose that he shall have one chance more; for I am not, all at once, going to cast aside a favourite and long-cherished plan."

"Very well, madam, I shall execute your wishes," replied Madame de Beaurevoir; "but I cannot help wishing," she added in a low voice, "that poor dear Mademoiselle Alicia

had not been coming under present circumstances."

"I shall not detain you any longer, Madame," said Mrs. Charteris, haughtily, and appearing not to have heard her last words.

The same post which had brought Alicia's letter, brought Kate an epistle from her mother. It had been written a few hours after her departure, and was so full of regrets and sorrowful anticipations, as to be very far from cheering. One piece of good news was contained in it, which indeed had prompted Mrs. Devereux to write so speedily. Letters had reached her from the boys, telling of their safe arrival in India, and dated from Bombay, where they were to remain a few weeks before journeying into the interior. Reginald wrote in excellent spirits, and spoke much of the generosity and magnificence of their uncle. Beautiful Arab ponies, and palanquins with their attendant bearers, were always at their disposal. Whatever they asked for they received, and they were in the habit of spending more money in a single day, than they had ever possessed during their whole lives before.

Bernard's letter was also written in good spirits, but there was a difference in its style from that of his brother. He spoke of his uncle's generosity, but owned that he could not help being afraid of him; yet, on the whole, he was tolerably happy, because his brother loved him and was very kind to him; besides, he often amused himself with thinking of home, and wondering what they were all doing there.

The next day, after breakfast, Madame set off to meet Alicia Forster, and reached the inn at Bracklebury about half an hour before her arrival.

"I am so glad, so happy to see you, dear Madame!" exclaimed Alicia, running to embrace her, the moment she saw her; "Well, Madame," continued she, drawing her towards the fire, "do you know why I sent for you? Can you guess what I wish to say?"

"I am sure, my dear, I cannot," replied the Frenchwoman, looking at her with her piercing black eyes, in a way which made Alicia colour.

"Now, do not tease me," said Alicia, turn-

ing away her head ; " I am sure you can guess, without giving me the trouble to explain."

Madame laughed, and shook her head.

" Well, you dear, good-for-nothing, provokingly-stupid, creature," continued the latter, " if I must speak out, I want to hear all about Lionel ! What is he like now ? Is he much changed ? Do *you* like him ? Do you think he is as fond of me as he used to be ? Come, sit down by the fire and tell me every thing."

" My dear Alicia," replied Madame, " how can you be so silly ! Mrs. Charteris expects us home to an early luncheon, and the carriage will be ready directly ; for I told the servants that we should start immediately."

Alicia replied, " Oh ! that is easily arranged ; don't trouble yourself about it !" So, rising, she rung the bell, and desired the waiter to tell Mrs. Charteris' servants that the carriage would not be wanted for an hour. Madame sighed, and looked very uneasy ; but this only made Alicia laugh.

" Come," she exclaimed, " be reasonable ! I am responsible for detaining the carriage !

Aunt knows I am self-willed ! Now, begin, Madame ! I know you can describe character beautifully !—I am all attention !” Madame still hesitated. “ Good heavens ! you frighten me !” exclaimed Alicia ; “ What does all this mean ?”

“ It means,” replied Madame, who now felt herself obliged to speak out, “ that Lionel is very much changed. I do not like him at all, and think him quite unworthy of you !”

“ Has his conduct been bad ?” said Alicia, turning pale, “ or does he love another ?”

“ Neither, I believe,” replied Madame ; “ but his whole soul appears to be occupied in a contest with his mother. It is enough, that Mrs. Charteris should wish a thing, to make him dislike it. In short, he does not care for you, Alicia, and seems willing to consider the innocent flirtation that passed between you long ago, as mere child’s play.”

Alicia fixed her large blue eyes on Madame, in utter astonishment, and seemed for some moments quite stupified. At last, she threw her arms round Madame’s neck, and burst into a passionate flood of tears. The latter

did her best to console her, and tried, by every argument, to summon pride to her aid.

“It is all very well for you to talk, Madame,” replied Alicia, at last, “because you do not know Lionel, and I do. Though I have not seen him for nearly four years, I am sure I know him! He did once love me, and, God willing, he shall love me again!”

“My dear girl,” said Madame, “I beseech you to consider what you are about. Forgive me, for saying so, but you are a spoiled child; every body has given way to you, and yielded to your whims from your cradle. Now, do not be angry, Alicia, but I must, at the risk of displeasing you, speak honestly to you. Now that you are grown up, you cannot expect always to have your way in your journey through life. Believe me, crosses and contradictions are the lot of all the children of Adam! Resign yourself to your fate now, my dear child, and think no more of this fellow Lionel, who does not deserve you! All that passed between you, was but the nonsense of children;—I am sure you never

cared for him, and I should be delighted to tell him so, conceited coxcomb!"

"You will make me very angry, Madame," said Alicia, "if you say anything against Lionel. I do not blame him in the least. On the contrary I think his sentiments very natural. But I shall tell you what I think," continued she, compressing her lips and looking as stern as it was possible for her natural sunny countenance to do; "I think that my aunt, by her injudicious interference to bring this about, and by straining too tightly her maternal authority, has alienated Lionel from me, and done me the greatest injury which it is possible for one woman to do to another. And am I to sit quietly by and let events take their course? Delicacy, forsooth! Maidenly delicacy! No! I will have none of it!"

And here Alicia burst into another fit of hysterical sobbing. Madame did her best to soothe her, but Alicia would not listen to her.

"Leave me! Leave me alone!" she exclaimed; "I shall be better presently. Now do not speak to me for half an hour," she continued, as she got gradually calmer; "I want

to think,—to consider every thing,—and then to judge what course I had best adopt.”

Madame obeyed her, and went to the window at the other end of the room, where she amused herself looking out, till Alicia should again speak. In little more than twenty minutes, the latter addressed her,—“I have it! I have it, Madame,” she exclaimed; “I have decided on my part.”

“What have you decided to do, dearest Alicia?” asked the French woman.

“Nay, that is a secret,” replied the lively girl, drying her tears and smiling once more. “I may rely upon *you*, however,—may I not? *You* will not betray my secret! *You* will not make me feel awkward, even with Mrs. Charteris!”

“My dear Alicia, how can you speak so?” replied Madame; “you know that next to my own dear little girls you are nearest to my heart. I feel as a mother towards you, and therefore you may believe that your secret with me is inviolable. But I confess I am most anxious to know your plan—Why will you not tell me?”

“It is better not,” said Alicia, laughing, “but you must not be surprised at any thing I may do or say! Only be discreet. Come now, it is time to order the carriage ; though I confess I am rather nervous at the idea of entering the Hall.”

CHAPTER VII.

“Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!

No glory lives behind the back of such.

And, Benedict, love on, I will requite thee;

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band.”

Much Ado About Nothing.

It was about three o'clock, as Kate and the children, having finished their dinners, were amusing themselves in one of the passages, the weather being too stormy to allow them to go out a second time, when Madame de Beaurevoir, accompanied by an elegant young woman, advanced towards them.

"It is Cousin Ally! Cousin Ally!" exclaimed the children, running to meet them.

Kate remained behind, but she could not help starting when she beheld the young lady's face. She was so strikingly like her sister Annie! The clear, fair complexion, the long sunny curls, the sweet expression of countenance, the large dark blue eyes, and little smiling mouth, all were exactly the same, allowing for the difference between maturity and childhood. Perhaps, also, there was another difference, the expression of the child's face was the more pensive of the two; for Alicia's countenance was very arch, and there was a great deal of innocent malice in the sparkle of her eyes. *She* also looked hard at Kate, but did not address her, and said something in a low voice to Madame, evidently in reference to her; the two then passed on, leaving Kate in a state of bewilderment.

The meeting to which Alicia had so long looked forward, and which she latterly almost dreaded, at last took place. The lady decidedly carried off the advantage. Lionel was stiff, cold, and polite; but his manner

showed that he was ill at ease. Alicia was all smiles and gaiety, looking most provokingly happy, and showing very plainly, if looks, gestures, and words might be trusted, that Lionel was an object of complete indifference to her. This was by no means what that gentleman had expected, for he had taken up the notion that his cousin was passionately in love with him, and consequently felt piqued and provoked.

“ Well, after all,” he said to himself, “ it is just as well it should be so ; for it would have been on my conscience had it broken her heart. What a pretty creature she is ! ”

He often said so to himself during the first evening Alicia spent at the hall, and, contrary to his predetermined resolution, actually remained in the drawing-room for some hours after tea. It is true, he sat in a corner, and pretended to be quite engrossed with a book ; but he listened to every song Alicia sung, and heard every word she said, either to his mother, Madame de Beaurevoir, or Devereux, with whom she kept up a very animated conversation. Her merry laugh was often

heard, but did not altogether sound musically in his ears, and once in particular he muttered to himself—

“What confounded nonsense that fellow Devereux is talking to her! How can he be such a coxcomb?”

He then got up and left the room, and Alicia appeared suddenly to get tired, and had very little more to say; but made an excuse about her fatigue, to account for her wish to go to bed. Madame de Beaurevoir, who had spent the evening in the drawing-room, accompanied her to her sleeping apartment.

“Well,” exclaimed Alicia laughing, and throwing herself down on an arm-chair, “what do you think of my behaviour? Have I done it well?”

“Excellent!” replied Madame, laughing also, “nothing could be better! But you frighten me, Alicia; you are such an accomplished dissembler! Who could believe that you are the same girl I beheld this morning sobbing so passionately!”

“Now, Madame,” interrupted Alicia, colour-

ing slightly, and putting her hand on her friend's mouth, "I forbid you to mention or think of that scene again ! I was, indeed, very foolish, but I have got more sense now ! You said truly that Lionel is not worthy of me ! He is not half so agreeable as Devereux, nor yet so handsome ; I doubt even if he is as gentlemanly ! That is an odious expression he has in his upper lip ; besides, he has green eyes and fair hair ! I hate fair hair in a man ! No, I don't like him at all ! So now, Madame, remember that I said so, if Mrs. Charteris should ask you !"

"But Alicia, my love, how very fickle you are !" exclaimed Madame ; "I should like to question you a little."

"But I am too sleepy to be questioned," said Alicia, yawning ; "besides questions are always disagreeable ! I am an odious mixture of fickleness, pride, vanity, and self-will, as all my friends find out, sooner or later, to their cost. Now good night, Madame ! But do not be vexed with me !" she continued, as she saw a tear rise in Madame's eyes, who was slowly turning away ; "I confess I am very

self-willed, but I do dearly love *you*, and after a few days, when I have more clearly shaped out my own course, I shall speak very frankly, and tell you all." And so saying, Alicia kissed Madame affectionately, who wished her good night and retired.

"What has become of Zoe?" inquired Alicia next morning at breakfast, when the party were all assembled.

"You mean the handsome black mare, I suppose," said Devereux; "I have her still, and she is at your disposal, if you like to mount her."

"I should like it very much indeed," said Alicia, "if you are sure she is not too spirited for me."

"I am quite sure you are able to manage her," replied Devereux; "but I am sorry that I cannot offer my services till after luncheon, at two o'clock."

"*I shall do myself the honour of escorting Miss Forster after breakfast,*" said Lionel.

"Oh, pray do not give yourself so much trouble," replied Alicia, in careless laughing accents; "I would rather wait for Devereux;

he is so droll, he keeps me laughing all day long!"


"As Miss Forster pleases," said Lionel, bowing stiffly, and walking away.

The faintest perceptible smile might be discerned trembling on Alicia's lips, while her eyes followed him till he was out of sight. She coloured up to the temples when, on looking at Mrs. Charteris immediately afterwards, she discovered the old lady's searching gaze fixed upon her. Her confusion soon disappeared, for Miss Jones came to her relief.

"Have you seen Miss Bottom, Alicia?" inquired that lady; "Miss Kittenbottom, I mean; you know that is my *nom de guerre* for Kate Dukes, the children's new maid."

"You are happy in your choice of names," replied Alicia, laughing. "Yes, I have seen the children's new maid, and a very fine-looking girl she is; almost too lady-like for her situation.—Where did you pick her up, Mrs. Charteris?"

"I advertised in the newspapers, and she replied to my advertisement," replied the old lady.



“ Oh ! newspapers ! ” exclaimed Miss Jones ; — “ Quack pills ! — I understand ! — Poor Miss Bottom ! — Another edition of Holloway’s Ointment ! — My dear fellow,” she continued, turning towards Devereux, “ how long is it since you patronized old Holloway, — old Parr I mean, — no, what did I say ? — Bottom I mean, Kittenbottom, Kate Kittenbottom ! — You told me to be kind to her, you know ! Has Devereux told you to be kind to Kate yet, Alicia ? He told me — Thinks well of her, — well-principled, — virtuous girl, — does not mean to have much to do with her though, you know ; but wishes me, and *you* too if you like, to patronize her. I have warned her already about dragons ; that is to say, I have embodied Devereux in a myth ; that means a parable, an allegory. So to-day I mean to sing to her the old song, —

“ Poppies like these I know are rare,
And of such nightingale’s songs beware ! ”

“ Johnny, you are mad, — you are a fool ! ” exclaimed Devereux, getting quite angry.

“ Really, Miss Jones,” said Mrs. Charteris with dignity, “ your levity is most unbecoming, particularly in my son’s presence.”

Poor Miss Jones was silent for a short time, looking quite crest-fallen ; but she speedily recovered her spirits, when morning visitors were announced.

It was scarcely half-past eleven when Miss Mitten and her brother made their appearance. The former, in her usual officious style, had not waited to inquire if the family were at home, but simply saying, “ Ladies in the morning-room, I suppose ?” she pushed past the servant and calling to her brother,—“ This way, this way, Dioclesian,”—had almost succeeded in announcing herself, had not her brother, whose reverence for the great was unbounded, held her back, whispering, at the same time, “ What a solecism in etiquette, Lucretia ! I blush for you !”

Mr. Dioclesian Mitten, or, as Miss Mitten generally called him, ‘ My brother, the merchant,’ was an exceedingly small, tiny, little man, with sharp diminutive features, a hooked nose, and yellow hair. His dress was the

perfection of neatness, and his linen unrivalled in whiteness and fineness. His gait was springy and jaunty, and forcibly reminded one of a bird. His admiration of the house of Charteris was excessive, and having been born in the parish of Charteris-long-Stoke, where his father had been apothecary, everything done or said at the Great House seemed to him "wisest, virtuouslest, discreetest, best."

Miss Jones immediately took a fancy to him, not having seen him before, it being his first return to his native place since he was a boy; and her lively imagination instantly detected a resemblance between him and her canary. So, taking a chair beside him, she commenced to entertain him, by inquiring,—

"Are you fond of excitement, Mr. Mitten?"

"Of what, madam?" replied he, looking deferential.

"Of excitement, Mr. Mitten?" replied Miss Jones, with decision; "of thoughts that scald, of words that burn! Are you Byronic? Do

you ever sit with shirt collar down, and eyes 'in fine frenzy rolling?'"

"I beg pardon, madam," replied Mr. Mitten, who rather mistook her drift; "but I never could be guilty of such a solecism in good breeding and etiquette as to appear before you, or any other lady, with my shirt collar down."

"Oh! poets, you know, are privileged beings," exclaimed Miss Jones; "I should not mind it in the least, if you liked it. But we have wandered from the subject: I asked you if you were fond of excitement,—not spirituous excitement, but spiritual,—in short, of beauty, wine, and song."

Little Mr. Dioclesian Mitten looked bewildered and awe-struck, for he always admired what he could not understand. He would have asked Miss Jones to explain herself more clearly, had he not been interrupted by his sister rising to depart.

"Adieu, Mrs. Charteris," whispered Miss Mitten, as she pressed her hand; "I am so glad and thankful that I have had an oppor-

tunity of putting you on your guard against that artful creature."

"Pray give yourself no more concern about it," rejoined the old lady ; "though obliged to you for your caution, I scarcely think it was necessary."

CHAPTER VIII.

“If she do frown, 'tis not in hate of you,
But rather to beget more love in you :
If she do chide, 'tis not to have you gone.”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE next morning, at breakfast, Alicia was, as usual, exceedingly gay, rattling on from one subject to another, and saying whatever came uppermost, not in the least chilled by the gravity and dignity of Lionel's manner. Mrs. Charteris, too, seemed to have recovered her spirits, and several times laughed very heartily at Alicia's *badinage* with Devereux. Miss Jones, likewise, put in her word now and then, and said something quite beyond

the purpose, but always droll ; or else took the contrary extreme, and said things entirely by accident which hit some one of the party, and were exceedingly awkward. Alicia now and then addressed Lionel in a careless sort of way, but rarely waited for an answer, being in such a hurry to continue her playful skirmish with Devereux, who, like herself, was rattling on in very high spirits.

“ Charming, is not it ? ” said Miss Jones, in a loud whisper to Mrs. Charteris, nodding towards the two, and laughing ; “ Made for each other, positively ! Adam and Eve in Paradise over again ! Hope this match may not be spoilt, or it will be Paradise Lost ! Adam, Devereux Charteris ! Eve, Alicia Forster ! Sweet, is not it ? He is my Magnus Apollo ! She is sweet Hebe ! Lovely pair, are they not ? Both paired and matched ! Might run in a curricule ! Adam and Eve in a curricule ! How delightful ! And there is the fallen archangel,” she continued, pointing to Lionel ; “ severe in youthful beauty, and envious of their happiness ! ”

"Hush!" interrupted Mrs. Charteris, afraid of Lionel hearing her.

"Oh, don't ask me to be silent," replied Miss Jones, aloud. "Why stop the music of the spheres? Lionel, I was paying you a compliment just now. Comparing you to the brightest star of the morning—Lucifer himself! Why don't you speak to me? You have quite given up talking and laughing with poor Betty Jones now. Am I changed? Or art thou? Canst thou love, or dost thou hate?"

"Neither, Johnny," replied Lionel; for the first time, his countenance relaxing into a faint smile. "I am getting old, and have neither spirits nor inclination for jesting."

"Very true, very true," exclaimed Miss Jones, nodding to Lionel, and then looking towards Devereux and Alicia, who were laughing very much, as if she wished to call his attention to what they were about; "The noisy laughter of the fool is like the crackling sound of blazing thorns!"

"Insufferable! disgusting!" muttered Lionel

to himself; but whether he referred to the other party or to Miss Jones, the latter had no means of deciding, for he got up hastily and left the room; though not before he had heard Alicia say to Devereux—

“Are you fond of flirtation? I am uncommonly! In fact, I can’t live without it.”

“So it appears,” said Lionel to himself, with a sneer, as he closed the door of the breakfast-room.

“Well, I plead guilty to being rather partial to it,” replied Devereux, laughing; “particularly when it is with a light-hearted, merry girl like yourself.”

“Oh, pray do not flatter. I like bluntness,” said Alicia. “Come to the window with me, while I talk to you.”

The two accordingly rose from table, and then Alicia continued—

“Well, you like flirting, and so do I. Now this will be a very dull sojourn for me, unless I have some amusement. Suppose we flirt together every day, just to keep ourselves in practice. All in an innocent way, of course;

for I assure you that whatever I may say or do, I mean nothing—positively nothing.”

“Nor I,” said Devereux, laughing; “I mean positively nothing. Being a younger brother, and very thoughtless, it would be useless to inquire what are my intentions; for I never had, and never shall have any.”

“That will suit me exactly,” said Alicia; “for I am a giddy butterfly, without the least heart—so not having got it, it will be impossible to lose it.”

“Singular—very!” exclaimed Devereux; “and I, also, am like yourself,—a monster,—born positively without heart, but with a great flow of animal spirits, to make up for it. It seems to me we are made for each other.”

“Made to amuse each other, I dare say,” said Alicia; “and as we are such giddy, laughter-loving creatures, I don’t expect we’ll ever quarrel.”

“I should hope not,” said Devereux; “it would be a very dreadful thing if *we* quarrelled; because, if we did, we’d be sure to fall in love afterwards—which heaven forfend!

But, Alicia. I wish you would answer me a question—for my curiosity is strongly excited. Why don't you choose to amuse yourself with Lionel? He is a far better flirt than I am, ten times wittier, and more amusing! Besides, he is in low spirits, and it would do him good to stir him up a little."

"I am truly obliged for your proposal!" replied Alicia, colouring slightly; "Lionel, indeed! The most disagreeable man, without exception, I ever met with! Even worse than yourself, and that is saying a good deal! No! If *you* do not choose to give me a little amusement, you may go your own way and I shall take mine, for I assure you I can do without you! But as for Lionel! I would as soon think of flirting with a great polar bear. The idea! You have positively made my face flush, I feel so indignant!"

"So I perceive!" replied Devereux, looking at her with some curiosity; "well, I beg your pardon if I have offended you; and now in atonement, I profess myself your very obedient, humble servant; ready to flirt with you, ride with you, walk with you, carry your

pocket handkerchief, and in short, be your most obsequious slave ; that is, as long as you do not try me too far !”

“Oh ! You most ungallant of mortals, to make such a reservation, after beginning your speech so prettily !” said Alicia ; “well, let it be understood that there is an alliance offensive and defensive, between us. So, for the present, good bye ! I am going to embroider with Mrs. Charteris ! Now don’t forget that I have given you the preference, only because you are the least disagreeable of the younger portion of the family, and that is saying very little in your favour.”

So saying, Alicia followed her aunt to the library, where she generally sat in the mornings.

As for Kate, this day passed very like the preceding ; she walked and played with the children, and filled up the intervals with needle-work. While out with her charge, she several times met Devereux, who always stopped and said a few words to her ; but she answered him as shortly and respectfully as she could, for she feared that Mrs. Charteris

would dislike her speaking to him at all. Once, during the forenoon, Miss Jones entered the apartment where she was working.

"Miss Kittenbottom," she exclaimed, "do you happen to know anything about homæopathy? I mean homæopathy as opposed to allopathy! For I am in a state of great mental embarrassment, about one of my sons! He appears to be in a precarious state, which denotes that stringent measures are necessary."

"Indeed!" said Kate, "may I ask what is the matter?"

"Matter, child! It is no ordinary matter!" exclaimed Miss Jones, in tragic accents; "it is enough to make your young blood curdle, and your veins grow cold! I could unfold a tale of horror, such as would make thy hair stand on end, were it not for the rebellious cap! Tremble, child, for the same may be thy own fate one day! *Licky has got the pip!* But I trifle,—I waste time, while my darling is suffering! *Addio, addio, Kate Kittenbottom!* May you never experience a mother's agonies like mine! *Au revoir!* Remember me in your prayers!"

And so saying, Miss Jones skipped out of the room, and ran up stairs to Parnassus.

The same evening, just as Kate was about to prepare for bed, she heard a light tap at her door, and Madame entered.

"Kate," she said, "your services are required this evening; Miss Forster's maid is suffering from severe tooth-ache, and is obliged to go to bed. Could you undress Miss Forster, and brush her hair, do you think?"

"I shall be very happy to do my best," replied Kate, putting on once more her little cap, which she had just taken off before Madame entered.

"*O ciel!*" exclaimed Madame, with a gesture of impatience, "how you do disfigure yourself! With such a classically formed head, it is a sin to wear a mob-cap! Now I insist upon your going to Miss Forster as you are! I wish her to see you and talk to you; she may be a valuable friend for you, some day."

"I am much obliged to you, Madame," said Kate, "for the interest you take in me; but

I think I ought to wear my cap ; it is more becoming my situation."

"No, you shall not," said Madame, imperiously ; "I forbid you ! Now, make haste ; you know the room ; Miss Forster has been waiting a long time."

Kate was accordingly obliged to go to Miss Forster without her cap ; but her face flushed as she went along, for she felt rather ashamed of appearing before her in a different style from usual. Just as she emerged from the back stairs, and was crossing the great corridor, a door opened suddenly, and she came full in front of Mrs. Charteris and Devereux, who both started at the unexpected apparition. Kate curtsied, and drew back to let them pass, but as she did so, her colour deepened still more, and she looked quite lovely in her confusion. Devereux gazed at her in admiration, but Mrs. Chatteris seemed exceedingly annoyed and offended,—at least Kate fancied so.

"Who have we here ?" exclaimed Alicia in surprise, as she entered. "This is not Kate Dukes, certainly !"

"I beg your pardon, Miss Forster," said Kate ; "Madame sent me here to supply your maid's place, and she forbade me to put on my cap ; but if you wish I can return for it."

"Oh, by no means!" said Alicia ; "it will be quite an amusement for me to look at you ! You are so strikingly like Mr. Devereux, it is quite absurd !—downright absurd !" she continued, laughing ; "and yet I did not notice the resemblance so much, when your cap was on ! You might pass very well for brother and sister !—nay, for twins ! What part of the country do you come from ?"

"From the Parish of Everingham, in ——— shire," replied Kate, who did not at all like to be questioned ; "Your hair is very long, ma'am, I hope I do not hurt you in combing it."

"Not at all," said Alicia, "you do it very nicely, quite as well as a regular lady's-maid. Why don't you become lady's-maid ? It would be less trouble, I should think, than attending on children."

"I should not like it at all, ma'am," said Kate.

"Indeed! Why not? Oh! I forgot, some one told me that you never take your meals with the servants.—How is that? Is it a fancy of my good aunt's, or your own wish?"

"Mrs. Charteris desired it should be so, ma'am," said Kate.

"Oh, what nonsense!" replied Alicia; "a young girl like you without companions of any description, and no one to speak to except the children. It is enough to make you turn melancholy mad. I shall talk to Mrs. Charteris about it, and get it better arranged."

"Oh, pray don't, ma'am!" exclaimed Kate in distress; "Mrs. Charteris has arranged everything for the best. I am quite contented and comfortable."

"It will be difficult to persuade me that you are so, in the circumstances," said Alicia. "How long have you been here?"

"Only two or three days, ma'am," replied Kate.

"That accounts for you being so happy; you have not had time to get dull yet; but by the end of another week you will be miserable."

"I hope not, ma'am," said Kate, with a sigh.

"Well, you will show great strength of mind if you are not," continued Alicia; "I don't know how it is, but you seem to me like one out of her proper element here. Now, own the truth, is it not so?"

The tears rose in Kate's eyes, as she replied, "Your question, ma'am, is scarcely fair."

"Do not answer me, then, I beg of you," said Alicia; "I am sorry to have hurt your feelings. Come, let us change the subject. Tell me how many brothers and sisters you have, and if they are all at home?"

"I have three brothers and three sisters, ma'am," replied Kate, glad to escape from her dilemma. "The two eldest boys are in India with their uncle. The eldest girl, next to myself, assists her mother at home, in taking care of the two youngest children, and I have another sister in France."

"Oh, in service, I suppose. Is she lady's-maid, or what is she doing there?" asked Alicia.

"She is at school, ma'am," replied Kate;

“her uncle in India pays for her education, which my mother could not have afforded.”

“Oh! at school, is she?” exclaimed Alicia; “then she means to be a governess. Come, that is quite grand. But why did not your uncle make you a governess, too? You are sufficiently like a lady to pass any where. Now tell me all about it, and why you went into service. I am very curious, and I like to hear every thing; particularly if there is any thing romantic to be told. There, now, leave off brushing, and sit down.”

Kate left off brushing, but did not sit down. She stood still a minute or two, hesitating.

“Come, don’t be silly!” said Alicia; “sit down when I desire you, and begin directly—‘Once upon a time.’”

“I beg your pardon, ma’am, but is it not too late?” said poor Kate, in evident perplexity; and then seeing that Alicia would not be put off, but pointed to the chair, she continued, “I am very sorry, ma’am, but I hope you will excuse me; for Mrs. Charteris forbade me to talk of myself, or my concerns,

to any one, during the month I am to remain here."

"Well, I never heard any thing so strange!" said Alicia; "What harm can it do my aunt, your speaking about yourself? And you say you are only to remain a month! Is she dissatisfied with you?"

"I hope not, ma'am," said poor Kate, colouring; for she did not at all enjoy the blunt manner in which Miss Forster spoke. "Mrs. Charteris has promised to get me another situation, if she is satisfied with me during this month of trial. But, indeed, ma'am, I fear I have done wrong in telling you that I am only to stay a month. I ought not to have said anything about it."

"Oh! don't be alarmed!" said Alicia, "I shall set all right for you! But what a delightful mystery! I must get to the bottom of it, and hear it all from Mrs. Charteris herself!"

"Oh, ma'am! I implore you to do nothing of the kind! She will think I have been very imprudent; or how should you have found out that there is any mystery about me at all.

Pray, dear Miss Forster, do not mention my name to Mrs. Charteris!" exclaimed poor Kate.

"Now, Kate, you are a silly little thing," replied Alicia; "and you do not know me, or you would not ask me. I can do as much for you as Mrs. Charteris can, and I promise you, that if you lose her good graces, you shall gain mine. Besides, I do not mean to make any mischief between you and her. I mean simply to question her about her ridiculous restrictions with regard to you. Now, go to bed, and do not be silly. You may dry your eyes, for I promise you to stand your friend."

Kate said good night, and left the room, for she saw it was no use to argue with the wilful young heiress.

The next morning, at breakfast, Lionel was as usual very silent, while Miss Jones chattered without ceasing, and made so many remarks upon him that he lost all patience.

"Lionel!" said she, "you look exactly like the tragic muse, Melpomene! So gloomy and

grand ! Pomene ! Pomene ! Not Pomona, for she was the goddess of apples ! but Melpomene ! or, rather, I should say something half way between Melpomene and the autocrat of all the Russias ! You look so awful, it makes me feel quite little. Now, pray, Lionel, dear Lionel, look not at me so ! annihilate me not with thy thunderbolts !”

Lionel grumbled something in an undertone about “Mad woman, learn to be silent !” But Miss Jones paid no attention, and turning round to Alicia, who was sitting next her, said, in a loud whisper, so as to make the young lady look very confused, “Better, my dear, to marry Adonis, that is, my long-legged darling, than wed the mighty Jove,—Jupiter Tonans, you know, alias Melpomene in her buskins !”

Alicia blushed, but took no notice of Miss Jones’ speech ; fortunately for her, Lionel did not appear to have heard it, for he turned round to her immediately, and inquired if she had enjoyed her ride yesterday.

“Ah ! exceedingly,” she exclaimed, quite thankful for this diversion from Miss Jones’

attack ; “the weather was delicious, and I never enjoyed anything more.”

“ Will you do me the honour of riding with me to-day ? ” asked Lionel, with less stiffness than usual.

“ I am exceedingly sorry,” said Alicia, looking really as if she meant what she said ; “ but the groom told me yesterday, that the black mare must rest a day or two, because she has hurt her foot, and I am too timid to mount any of the other horses. I shall be very happy to ride with you some other day.”

Lionel looked exceedingly pleased and happy, in consequence of the sweet smile with which Alicia uttered this, and he said something about his regrets. Alicia, however, must have fancied that she had gone too far, for she immediately added,—

“ After all, even if the mare had been well, I don’t think I should have ridden to-day, for I am feeling tired, and I promised Devereux to make a chain for him.”

“ A chain ! ” exclaimed Miss Jones ; “ Cupid’s chains ! Capital ! Little boy ! Wings ! Rosy

chains! Smiles and tears! Hope Cupid may not turn out to be a moth, and burn his wings! just as I nearly burnt my wings with Mr. Mitten to-day. I took an interest,—nay a tender interest, in Mr. Mitten, the moment I saw him.”

“Oh! Johnny, you are killing me,” exclaimed Devereux, laughing; “and did you tell him so?”

“No, of course I did not tell him the plain fact,—I only hinted it. Maidenly modesty,—maidenly modesty, you know. I am an ancient prude. Must keep up my character.”

“Then what did you tell him?” inquired Lionel, who could not keep from laughing also.

“Why, I talked mysteriously, and by a preternatural carriage of my body concealed the defects of my mind, as Johnson hath it,—the dictionary, I mean.”

“What has Mr. Mitten to do with Johnson’s dictionary?” asked Mrs. Charteris.

“Can’t really say,” replied Miss Jones, “unless that Dioclesian Mitten and I were *bifidated*. However, you don’t understand,—

I see you don't. I mean that he and I will soon be great friends,—another edition of *Pyramus and Thisbe*,—but all Platonic, all Platonic. We'll call ourselves *Valentine and Orson*, Mrs. Charteris, if you prefer that cognomen to *Pyramus and Thisbe*. No intention, I assure you, of invoking the saffron god. No, no; I'll remain faithful to Dicky till death us do part. However, no saying what may happen; for Dicky may die, since he has got the pip."

"The what?" asked Alicia.

"The pip, my dear, the pip," replied Miss Jones. "Very painful disorder, which canaries are liable to,—just the whooping-cough or measles for children. Hope it may not go through all the family now."

"But what *is* the pip?" asked Lionel;
"Come, Johnny, explain!"

"The pip?" replied Miss Jones, "Why the pip is just the pip! Neither apple-pips, nor yet a pipkin! Why, bless my heart, Lionel, you are exceedingly stupid to-day, not to know what the pip means! Here have I been explaining for the last ten minutes—nay, you

need not laugh! you'll laugh on the wrong side of your head when you take the pip! And I'll tell you beforehand, I won't nurse you! No I won't, indeed, Jupiter Tonans! Jupiter Tonans with pip!—pip!—pip!—pip! Good bye, I am tired of you all!" And so saying Miss Jones flounced out of the room, with the air of a tragedy-queen, muttering still, as she made her exit, "Jupiter Tonans with pip! pip! pip!"

The day being fine, and the ladies at home, a great many morning visitors were received in the course of the forenoon; so that Alicia, though several times on the point of speaking to Mrs. Charteris about Kate, was always interrupted. At last she forgot all about it, and thought no more of it till after tea. Lionel had been looking much more amiable than usual, when the family party met at their meals, and after the tea equipage was removed, still lingered in the drawing-room. Perhaps Alicia thought that he was getting too confident in his own powers of fascination; at any rate, she seemed to think that it was time for her to resume her former indifferent

style. Lionel was wholly unconscious of the trial awaiting him, and after a few minutes, fetched some beautiful engravings, just arrived from town, and placing himself on the vacant seat by Alicia's side, began to show them to her. She was very fond of engravings, and warmly expressed her admiration of their beauty. Lionel had great taste in the fine arts, which he had cultivated during his long residence abroad, so it was quite a treat to hear him descant on the different merits of the pictures. Alicia listened with undisguised pleasure, and this made her companion more eloquent. In this way, nearly an hour elapsed, which seemed to the two, so much engrossed by their occupation, like little more than a quarter of that time. Mrs. Charteris who was quite delighted, took up a book, and pretended not to notice the couple. Devereux and Miss Jones were chatting at the other end of the room, till at last Mrs. Chatteris called to the latter, and Devereux was left alone. Alicia observed this, and giving a start as if she suddenly remembered something, said to Lionel, "Excuse me, Mr. Charteris, I want very much to

talk to Devereux : pray leave these engravings for me to look at afterwards."

Lionel, who had become quite animated and excited with the pleasure of finding such a listener, gazed at his cousin in astonishment, as she left him so abruptly ; however, he kept his place, thinking, that perhaps she would come back.

" Well, Devereux, what have you been doing with yourself ?" exclaimed she ; " why did you not come to my rescue ?"

" Because you appeared to me very pleasantly engaged, judging from your countenance, and the wrapt attention you bestowed upon Lionel, who seemed in extraordinary spirits."

" The creature talks well when he likes to exert himself," replied Alicia ; " but you know as well as I do, that he is an abominable coxcomb. I am very sorry I looked attentive, it will make him so vain. Just look at him now, Devereux ; I declare he is waiting, expecting me to come back."

" Well, let us join him," said Devereux, " I like to see him look happy."

“ I desire you will sit still,” said Alicia; “ I have come here to talk with you. Remember our compact. You were to flirt with me whenever I liked. Now I am tired of conversation with Lionel. You have no idea how well we both spoke, each being desirous of shining; it would have read very well printed. What I want with you is small talk, gossip if you will,—what is vulgarly called slip-slop, or twaddle.”

“ Really you make me quite proud, Miss Forster,” said Devereux.

“ Mr. Devereux, don’t be so ridiculous as to take anything I say amiss. Both you and myself are incorrigible rattles, and we are mutually fair game. But, I forgot, I really have something serious to say to you. Can you tell me what the mystery is between your mother and Kate Dukes?”

“ No, indeed, I cannot,” replied Devereux, looking interested; “ but explain yourself,—what sort of mystery?”

“ Why the girl is quite a lady in language and appearance,” said Alicia; “ and, besides,

has a style about her, and an air of good blood, —don't you think so?"

"Indeed I do," said Devereux; "I came in the same coach with her to Bracklebury the day she arrived; and I give you my word I mistook her for a lady, and was quite struck with the dignity and propriety of her appearance."

"I dare say," she replied, fixing her laughter-loving eyes upon him very archly.—"Now I do firmly believe that the girl is a lady, and that your mother knows it.—It seems she is to go away at the end of the month!"

"That is too bad," said Devereux, "and quite ridiculous. What harm is there in her being like a lady? I do believe it is some whim of my mother's; she is so full of suspicions."

"Now you are so hot-headed; cannot you take my information quietly? Why should you bluster, and get excited like some knight paladin in Kate Duke's defence? But, seriously, tell me your opinion, what can your mother know of her? She has actually for-

bidden her to tell her history to any one in the house."

"How very odd," said Devereux; "I must have a chat with the girl myself to-morrow. There can be no harm in that, Alicia!"

"You shall do no such thing," replied she; "I mean to take the matter into my own hands. And, indeed, I think you look far too much interested in her. What business have you with ladies in disguise? You are so desperately romantic! I am very sorry that I told you anything about it."

"Well, if I am not to speak to Kate, what are you going to do?" he asked.

"What a simpleton you are! Of course I mean to get to the bottom of the mystery as fast as possible. Now, if you go and talk to Kate, you will make your mother very angry with the poor girl, and she will be in such bad humour about it, that I shall not be able to get any information out of her. On the other hand, if I find that you let Kate alone, I engage to learn the whole story from Mrs. Charteris, and, as a reward for your self-denial,

I may probably unfold the mystery to you."

"I am content," said Devereux; "But; dear me! where is Lionel gone? I did not see him leave the room."

CHAPTER IX.

“Frailty! thy name is Woman!”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE very first time that Alicia and Mrs. Charteris were alone together, the former commenced her premeditated attack.

“Aunt,” said she, “don’t you think that women are generally less curious than men?”

“I cannot agree with you,” replied Mrs. Charteris; “but of course there are exceptions to every rule. What puts the question into your head at present?”

“I cannot say exactly,” replied Alicia,

"unless it be, that this morning I have been analyzing my own character, and I have come to the conclusion that I am not curious. Still, I must confess that I enjoy knowing everything, and of course that is very different from mere vulgar, prying curiosity."

"In short," said her aunt, "you make a distinction between the active and passive states. You plead guilty to a desire of knowing everything, but you are ashamed of taking active steps to find out mysteries."

"Exactly so, aunt," replied Alicia, smiling; "you have precisely described my sentiments; and I think that in reward for my exhibiting so much self-command as I do, it becomes the duty of those relatives who take an interest in me to enlighten me."

"You must explain yourself further," rejoined Mrs. Charteris, fixing her piercing eyes upon Alicia, in a way that made her blush; so that it instantly came into her aunt's head, that she had some question to ask about Lionel.

"Will you promise me, then, to answer my question as faithfully as you can?" said Alicia;

"Because, unless you promise beforehand, I do not mean to ask anything."

"Undoubtedly, I shall—most undoubtedly," said Mrs. Charteris.

"Thank you, aunt, I am obliged to you ; For, as I said before, though I am not curious, yet I like to know everything. Well, what is the meaning of all this mystery about a certain individual in this house, who appears in a character quite foreign to her own ?"

"*His* own, you mean to say," replied Mrs. Charteris ; "you are in a strange state of confusion this morning ! But I suppose you wish to know the meaning of Lionel's strange manner. Is it so ?"

"Of Lionel's manner, aunt !" exclaimed Alicia, in astonishment ; "what have I to do with Lionel ? I assure you Lionel is nothing to me ! I suppose, as he is *your* son, I ought not to abuse him ; but I cannot help saying that I consider him the most disagreeable man I almost ever met with. I can hardly believe he is Devereux's brother. What a dear creature Devereux is ! I like *him* beyond everything, and we get on so

well together ! But, Aunt, you are forgetting that you promised to answer my question faithfully."

"Yes, my dear, I certainly promised," said Mrs. Charteris, looking rather annoyed ; "but I promised when I thought it referred to Lionel."

"So you did, Aunt," said Alicia ; "but a promise is a promise, all the world over, and you are not the person to break it. So now, aunt, tell me all about Kate Dukes, who and what she is ; and also explain the reason of so much mystery and concealment about her. Why have you forbidden her to talk about herself ?"

"And how, Alicia Forster," exclaimed Mrs. Charteris, with quivering lip and flashing eyes, "did you come to know that there was a mystery about that girl ? Has she presumed to hold any communication with you ? Pray, what has she told you ?"

"Nothing whatsoever, my dear Aunt," interposed Alicia, in deprecating accents ; "the poor girl would never have spoken to me at all, had I not sent for her the night before

last, to come to my room and brush my hair, because Celestine was poorly, and had to go to bed. Then I began, in my own careless, rattling way, to question her, and I did it so bluntly that I nearly made the poor thing cry. This excited my curiosity, and I should have gone on further, had she not firmly, yet respectfully, put a stop to my queries by stating your wishes, that she should abstain from talking of herself while under your roof. So now, dear Aunt, do not be angry with me, and remember your promise."

"I am very far from being satisfied with your conduct, Alicia," said Mrs. Charteris; "however, I must perform my promise. Kate Dukes is the daughter of a gentleman of good family, who married beneath himself, and for that reason, amongst others, was disowned by his connexions. Her father being dead, and her mother in reduced circumstances, Kate very properly determined to do something for herself. As she is not sufficiently accomplished to act as governess, unless for very young children, and as she is too proud to be companion or toady, she determined to

stoop at once and enter service ; thinking she would have fewer mortifications to undergo, in a situation such as she fills now, than as a humble gentlewoman."

"And so that is all," said Alicia, looking thoughtful; "but why did you forbid her to speak about herself to any one? What harm could that do?"

"While she remains here as children's maid, she must perform her duties in that capacity, as if she had been born and bred to it, or else she must be sent home," said Mrs. Charteris. "It can neither do *her* good, nor any member of my family, to excite a sentimental sympathy in her regard, and these are the reasons why I have ordered her to keep silent. Are you satisfied now?"

"Partly so," said Alicia, musing, "but not quite. Since she is of such a good family as you say, how comes she to have such a vulgar surname as Kate Dukes?"

"Dukes is not her real name," said Mrs. Charteris, gruffly; "and now I must insist upon your giving me your word that you will take no steps to discover her own name as

long as she remains under my roof. I think I have a right to demand this."

"You are very hard upon me," said Alicia, "I suppose, however, I must obey; but, of course, when she leaves your service, if that should ever happen, I mean to have many chats with her should she fall in my way, for I have taken a fancy to the girl. How like she is to Devereux in air and features!"

Mrs. Charteris looked annoyed, and replying in a cold, distant tone, "That is enough, Alicia, let us drop the subject"—took up a book and began to read.

"I am going to look for Devereux," said Alicia, getting up and leaving the room; "I want him to walk with me."

Ere long she found him, and they both took a turn in the grounds, while she talked to him, and related her conversation with his mother.

"Well, that is too bad," he exclaimed, as she finished; "my mother might have told you, I think, the girl's real name! I am very sorry you have promised not to try to find it out, for ladies always manage these things

best. However, I suppose I must, if you can't."

"Now, Devereux," said Alicia, "I beg you will not, for it would be treating your mother very badly. You are so abominably curious! Give me your word that you will not!"

"I would do anything for you, except that," replied he, laughing; "but I must get to the bottom of this mystery! I have set my heart upon it."

"Do so, if you please," said Alicia haughtily; "but if you do, you are no friend of mine in future! I am sure I wish I had never entered this house, you are all so disagreeable."

"Now, Alicia, do not get vexed with me; I was only in fun, and if it will give you any satisfaction, I promise not to seek to know the girl's name. Of course it is nothing to me."

"But it *is* something to you!" said Alicia, her eyes flashing, and her cheeks flushed; "You know you do feel a great interest in the girl, Devereux, and you cannot deny it! I also felt a strange interest in her, the moment

I beheld her my heart spoke in her favour, though at first I did not listen to it."

"Alicia," said Devereux, "for heaven's sake, stop this nonsense, or I shall think you are gone mad! You are as wild as Johnny herself!"

"Well, why should not I be excited, and wild, and mad, if I please!" exclaimed Alicia, "when I tell you, that before I spoke to my aunt at all I had made a discovery entirely by myself, and with no one's assistance, that Kate Dukes is—now guess, Devereux!—is, ———what do you think?"—

"I am sure I cannot guess," said Devereux, "but I wish you would make haste to tell me, for I am dying of impatience to know!"

"Well, then, to end your suspense, I shall tell you,—she is Kate Devereux, our uncle Reginald's daughter! At least I firmly believe so!"

"You are jesting, Alicia,!" cried Devereux; "Now do talk seriously, and do not make a fool of one so!"

"I tell you," replied his cousin, "that I am

perfectly serious, and shall get quite vexed if you do not believe me! This morning I entered the children's play-room accidentally, and found they had gone out. Seeing a pretty little work-basket lying on the table, I took it up, fancying it might be Eva's, and half thinking of slipping some trifle into it for her doll. In one corner I discovered a tiny little volume; it was Moore's Irish Melodies; and on the fly-leaf had been writing, but over it was a piece of paper pasted down. Like a true daughter of Eve, I took it up, and tried to decipher it. Imagine how I was startled. I made out the words, 'To my own dear Kate, from her affectionate father, Reginald Devereux'! I then went straight to my aunt, and from what she said was confirmed in my preconceived belief, that this Kate is the daughter of our long-forgotten Uncle!"

"By Jove! I am glad to hear it!" cried Devereux; "Where is she, that I may run to wish her joy!"

"You are to do no such thing," said Alicia;

“ this is entirely my affair, because I found it out, and I shall be exceedingly angry if you interfere with me.”

“ What do you mean to do ?” asked Devereux ; “ Of course you will not let the matter rest !”

“ Of course I will not,” said Alicia ; “ but I think the best plan will be, in the first place, to find out my aunt’s intentions ; and if nothing better turn up for Kate, I shall take her with me, when I leave the Hall.”

“ But it is most shameful and most abominable,” interposed Devereux warmly, “ for my mother, knowing as she must, who she is, to keep her in her present degrading position. The daughter of my father’s brother, a servant in this house ! Good heavens ! It makes my blood boil !”

“ Well,” said Alicia coolly, “ let us go together and speak to your mother about it ; she will get into a violent passion, and turn the girl out of the house at once.”

“ Nothing more probable,” said Devereux ; “ then what would you advise should be done ?”


"I shall think over the matter, and tell you by and by," replied she, in a more serious tone than was her wont; "It appears to me, that supposing we were to talk to Aunt about Kate, there are three courses open for her to adopt at this moment."

"And what are they, most wise and sapient Alicia; for the mantle of wisdom seemeth to have fallen upon thee?" said Devereux.

"She must either send her home at once, or keep her here in her present capacity, or advance her to the drawing-room, and treat her as a lady."

"It would be most cruel and unnatural," said Devereux, "to send our new-found relation away so cavalierly, and I protest against it. Why cannot my mother do her duty, and tell every body what relation she is to us, and treat her as such?"

"And a very pretty effect it would have on the whole establishment," said Alicia, "if a young woman entering as servant into the house should suddenly be treated as a lady, and called our cousin. I think you are mad! No, the best thing would be to send her home



as fast as possible, of course in a kind sort of way, and try to do something for her and her family."

"It is an awkward dilemma," said Devereux, "but I still protest against sending her home. What do you think my mother means to do?"

"I fancy," said Alicia, "she means to keep her here till her month is out, and that in the mean time she is looking for a more suitable situation for her."

"In that case," said Devereux, "I suppose I had better avoid her, or I shall betray my indignation at seeing her treated like a servant."

"The less you see of her the better," said Alicia, ; "I suspect you are made of very inflammable stuff, and you ought not to put yourself in the way of temptation."

Alicia now went into the house, while her cousin pursued his walk, meditating on what he had just been told. He had not gone far when he heard the children's voices.

"Shall I speak to Kate or not?" said he to himself.

Prudence said "No."

Inclination and impulse said "Yes."

The latter prevailed. He soon got up to the group, and exclaimed,—

"Remain behind, Kate! I want to speak to you!"

He hesitated, and stopped short, while Kate cast a hurried and alarmed glance towards him.

"To me, sir!" she cried, "I beg your pardon, but Mrs. Charteris does not like me to talk with anybody." And poor Kate heaved a sigh.

"My mother gave you that caution, Kate," replied Devereux, "at a time when she believed no one was acquainted with your real character and circumstances. I had resolved not to speak to you, Kate; but now that I see you, my resolution melts away, and I cannot resist the temptation of telling you, that I admire and respect you for your conduct in your present position."

"Sir," said Kate, trembling, "you bewilder me! What do you know about me? Has Mrs. Charteris told you anything?"

“Why do you tremble, you silly little thing?” said Devereux, affectionately; “it is no matter how I have come to fathom your mystery. Suffice it to say, that I know it, and mean to act upon my knowledge! Have I not a right to chat with my own cousin?”

“I do not understand you at all, sir,” said Kate, looking annoyed and bewildered; “my future prospects depend, at this moment, on my giving satisfaction to Mrs. Charteris; and she desires me to pay attention to the children, and not to talk to my superiors.”

There was a proud humility in Kate’s tone which was meant to repel Devereux; but he was not to be so repulsed, and contradiction only made him more determined to soften the frigidity of his new-found cousin’s manner.

“Now, Kate, this is perfectly ridiculous,” said he; “why cannot you be frank and open with me? Why this distrust? Is it right,—is it kind to your father’s nephew?”

“My father’s nephew!” exclaimed poor Kate, her bosom heaving; “say it again, sir! What do you mean?”

"That I am your father's nephew, Kate!" repeated Devereux; "You do not mean to pretend that you did not know that! My father's name was Lionel Devereux, and he took my mother's surname when he married the heiress of Charteris Hall."

"The ways of God are wonderful!" exclaimed poor Kate, turning ashy pale; "Now I understand the meaning of Mrs. Charteris' manner! She has been very kind, very kind indeed, in allowing me to remain till my month is out, when it must be so disagreeable to her to see me! But I cannot do it,—I must go home! I cannot keep up this character any longer! I was mad,—stark mad to come here at first!"

Big tears of shame and mortification were chasing each other down Kate's cheeks, when Devereux put his arm round her waist, and tried to console her; but she instantly relieved herself from his grasp, and only sobbed the more.

"Kate," said he, after waiting a few minutes, in hopes of her agitation subsiding, "I wish

you would try to calm yourself, and talk to me. I have much to say to you, and am afraid of being interrupted before I have done."

Kate tried to look up and smile, but her utterance was choked, and she could not speak ; so Devereux continued, " You must not think of returning home, until the time my mother fixed is over ; because if you did, it would give her offence, and she has it in her power to be very useful to you."

" And do you really think, Mr. Devereux," said Kate proudly, " that I am to continue as a servant in the house of my father's sister-in-law ? No, Heaven forbid ! You little know me ! I shall go immediately and ask to speak to Mrs. Charteris."

" Now, Kate, dear Kate," said Devereux, in deprecating accents, " I implore you, if you have any generosity, do not do me such an injury. You do not know my mother's character : you do not know how entirely dependent are her sons upon her ! She would be incensed, dreadfully incensed against me, for having enlightened you so far, and counteracted her plans ! I beg you, for my sake,

if you would not blast *my* prospects, not to take any notice in your communication with my mother, of what I have told you! I am a fool, a mad fool that cannot keep a secret!"

"It is too bad, Mr. Devereux," said Kate, "to put me in such a painful position! You ought either not to have told me my relationship, which in this case so far from being an honour, appears to me a disgrace, or else you ought to leave me free to act."

"Now, dear Kate," said Devereux, "pray moderate your indignation, and be not so hard upon your unfortunate cousin, who though he has acted from impulse, has done it all for the best. I only ask you to keep your own counsel and mine, for the next three weeks, a sufficiently short time! When that period is over, I have reason to hope that a change for the better will have taken place in our relative circumstances. Now, will you promise me? Promise your father's nephew, Kate."

The tears filled Kate's eyes again, as she held out her hand to her cousin, and gave the promise he required.

CHAPTER X.

“As joy is not without the alloy of pain, so neither is sorrow without its portion of pleasure. Joy and grief, though unlike, are united. Our own choice only can give us them entire.”—*Elegant Extracts.*

MRS. CHARTERIS had been much gratified, during the last few days, by observing a marked change upon Lionel. He appeared less gloomy and more amiable in his manner towards all, and in particular made himself agreeable towards herself.

“Lionel, dear Lionel,” she said to him one morning, when they happened to be the last to linger at the breakfast table, and she spoke

to him in such a gentle and almost sad tone, so unlike her usual voice, that he started,—

“ I wish to talk with you a little, my dear son, if you can spare me a few moments.”

“ Certainly, Mrs. Charteris,” replied Lionel, in his old, stiff manner, for the idea of another *tête-à-tête* with his mother recalled unpleasant recollections.

“ Nay, my son,” continued his mother, “ do not assume your armour of defence already ; look not so cold and reserved ; what I am going to say will be pleasant for you to hear. Ah ! Lionel, why do you mistrust me ? Why do you so seldom call me by the sweet name of mother ? ”

Lionel stared, he was so little prepared for any betrayal of sentiment on his mother’s part ; but the demon of contradiction had been roused, and he was determined not to soften, so he replied,—

“ I thought you had something pleasant to relate, and that you were not going to rake up old grievances ! ”

“ Well, my son,” continued Mrs. Charteris, trying to suppress a sigh, “ you are right in

your conjecture ; I want to talk to you about the settlement of my property, and about your brother Devereux."

"The property is yours to do what you please with," said Lionel, haughtily ; "I do not see that I am the proper person to consult."

"O Lionel!" exclaimed Mrs. Charteris, her eyes filling with tears, "why will you be so cold and unkind to your mother,—your poor widowed mother? I have sinned, my son, and I confess it, before God and you. I have sinned deeply, by my pride and love of dominion,—the sins which made the angels fall. But my eyes are now opened, and I repent in the sight of my heavenly Father. Alas! God has chastised me severely for my error, he has withdrawn from me the heart of my first-born, and steeled his breast against me. When a mother stoops to implore, can she not win back the love of her son?"

While his mother was speaking, Lionel had got up, and he now stood before her as pale as death, with his arms folded across his chest, and his features immoveable as those of a marble

statue. He appeared scarcely to hear her impassioned address, and after she had finished, remained for a moment or two without moving or speaking. His mother gazed at him in an agony of suspense ; for few could understand how much it had cost the proud, strong-minded woman thus to unbend herself.

“ And I have stooped for nothing ! My efforts are of no avail,” at last she whispered to herself. “ My God ! this is very bitter, and very hard to bear !” and she sunk back on her chair and covered her face with her hands.

“ Mother !” said Lionel, in a low voice, still maintaining the same rigid attitude ; “ Mother ! do you hear me, mother ? I am your son ! your own dear son ! I will never grieve you more ! In abasing yourself, you have conquered me. In future I shall be all you could wish. Mother ! dearest mother, speak to me !”

But Mrs. Charteris continued immoveable, with her hands covering her face. Lionel gazed upon her, astonished that she did not reply ; when suddenly he started, for he saw something which shocked him. He rushed towards her, and uncovered her face. She looked

pale and lifeless, while a stream of red blood was trickling down her dress.

"My mother! my mother! would to God I could die for thee!" exclaimed Lionel, wringing his hands in an agony of remorse and terror. He had presence of mind, however, to rush to the bell and pull it violently, and then he returned to his mother, and supported her head. Before the attendants had time to answer the summons, she opened her eyes and recognized her son, bending over her with looks of unutterable love and concern.

"Thank God! thank God!" she faintly whispered to herself, and then closed her eyes, exhausted.

The poor lady was carried up stairs to her room, and medical assistance sent for directly. Lionel himself got the fleetest horse in the stable saddled, and galloped off at his utmost speed to fetch the doctor from Bracklebury. Meantime, Alicia and Madame got the sufferer put to bed, and, by the aid of restoratives, revived somewhat her sinking vitality before the doctor arrived. Devereux was spared the agitation of the scene, for he had gone out

shooting immediately after breakfast. At last, in less time than could have been expected, the physician, Dr. Wiseman, made his appearance, and Lionel followed him in breathless agitation into the sick-room. Mrs. Charteris was lying on her back, propped up with pillows, her eyes were closed, and she was as pale as death. The doctor felt her pulse and shook his head ; he asked for a mirror, which he held for a few seconds before her mouth ; but the moisture, which speedily covered it, seemed to reassure him. He then sat down by the bed, still feeling her pulse, and observed her for a few minutes. Lionel, Madame, Miss Jones, and Alicia, all watched his countenance, with intense anxiety, but it was impenetrable. At last he whispered, "What were you doing before I came?"

"Moistening her lips with a feather dipped in wine, and rubbing her temples with ether," said Madame.

"Continue—continue to do so," said he, "till I send you what will be more suitable," and so saying, he got up and left the room. The whole party followed him into the

ante-room to hear the verdict of life or death.

"Speak, for God's sake!" cried Alicia, for Lionel seemed unable to utter a word; "is there any hope?"

"Yes, there is hope," replied the doctor; "though she is in a most precarious state."

"Thank God! Thank God!" exclaimed Lionel, sinking on a chair and covering his face with his hands, while he sobbed like a child.

"I shall send cordials from Bracklebury to restore her," continued the doctor, "and they must be administered every half hour. She must be watched with the greatest care, for the least negligence might be fatal. If suffered to sink while in this state of weakness, I cannot answer for her life. Who is going to take care of her? I suppose I had better send a nurse here immediately."

"It would be the best way, I have no doubt," said Alicia, who, being young and quite unaccustomed to a sick room, was terrified at the idea of so much responsibility.

"I beg your pardon, mademoiselle," said

Madame, "but in a case like this I must protest against trusting to a hireling. I have been much accustomed to nurse the sick, and know some of the duties of a sister of charity. Let *me* attend on her, and let *me* be responsible. When I get fatigued, and when my strength fails, then you may send for a nurse."

"You do not know what you undertake," said the doctor, scanning Madame from head to foot ; however, his investigation seemed quite satisfactory, for he added, "You are right ; her life is safest in your hands."

Madame did not wait for further discussion, but with a bright smile illuminating her expressive features, she bowed to the doctor, and noiselessly re-entered the sick lady's apartment.

"There goes a trump, if one may judge from physiognomy !" exclaimed the doctor, looking after her with satisfaction.

"She is an angel, if ever there was one," said Lionel, who by this time had somewhat recovered from his agitation.

"I shall do all in my power to help her," said Miss Jones.

"And I, too," said Alicia ; "but I know, to

my sorrow, I am but a useless creature," and she looked humbly and sadly at Lionel.

"What sort of constitution has your mother?" asked the doctor, turning abruptly to Lionel, as if he had not half appreciated these offers of service.

"A very strong one," he replied ; "In fact I never once remember my mother being ill. She is a person of such active habits, too!"

"And what was the cause of her present attack? It must have been no ordinary excitement," said the doctor.

"For love of her children," said Lionel, with quivering lip, yet in a low distinct voice. "She stooped her haughty nature, and not meeting with a frank and generous return, her proud heart broke."

Alicia fixed her sad, tearful eyes upon her cousin, and shuddered at the anguish depicted upon his countenance.

"Come, come, my dear fellow," said the good-natured doctor, who now had some suspicion of the truth; "you must not give way so. Your mother is a strong woman,—strong bodily and mentally. It is not so easy to

break her heart. Depend upon it, she will live many years yet, and you will be the support and comfort of her declining age."

Lionel could not speak, but he pressed the doctor's hand, as he accompanied him to the door.

"We have no time to lose," continued the physician, "you had better make one of the servants ride back again with me to Bracklebury, to get your mother's medicines. And keep up your spirits, Sir, for with care all may yet go well."

So saying, the doctor departed.

Devereux returned from his solitary shooting ramble about two o'clock, and as he entered by the back way, and went straight to his room, to change his dress, he chanced to meet no one to inform him of what had passed. His thoughts had been running upon his cousin Kate during the whole morning, and at last he had come to the resolution of making an exertion in her favour, by talking at once to his mother on the subject. He knew very well that there was a great risk, as Alicia had warned him of his mother

getting angry, and sending Kate off at once. Nevertheless, he had now come to the conclusion, that any thing was better than meeting her every day in a position so lowering, and he trusted much to his own influence with Mrs. Charteris, whose favorite he had always been supposed to be, and who had never hitherto refused him any request in her power to grant. Accordingly, as soon as he had changed his dress, he ran down stairs, to his mother's usual sitting room, and was surprised to find her absent. He then went straight to her apartments, thinking she might be in her dressing-room, where she sometimes sat when she wished to be alone, or had no visitors with her. The door was a-jar, and he walked in, but what was his surprise to see Alicia and Miss Jones, sitting, in silence, at the window, the former looking very anxious and concerned, and the latter weeping!

"What is the matter?" he exclaimed.
"Where is mother?"

"Hush!" said Alicia, with a face of sympathy, as, rising, she took his hand, "your mother is ill!" And then she pointed to the

door of the sleeping-room, which was a-jar. Devereux, alarmed, released himself from her grasp, and, moving softly towards it, looked in. His mother lay before him, on the bed, as pale as death, with her eyes closed, apparently scarcely breathing. Madame stood beside her, bathing her temples, and moistening her mouth from time to time. But she herself seemed quite unconscious.

"For God's sake, Alicia, what is this?" whispered Devereux, as he staggered back; "What has happened?"

"Your mother was talking with Lionel, after breakfast," replied she, in a low voice, "and, I suppose, became over-excited, for she has burst a blood-vessel."

"Cruel, heartless monster!" exclaimed Devereux, in the excitement of the moment, stamping his foot, and grinding his teeth; "He is no brother of mine! I can never, never, forgive him! Unnatural wretch! Oh! my poor mother! had I but been with you!"

"Devereux, are you mad?" exclaimed Alicia, with much anxiety; "Has Lionel not enough to bear, without the upbraidings of

his brother being added to his misery ! He, too, suffers deeply ; how deeply, none can tell !”

“Forgive me, Alicia,” said Devereux, “but I am mad ! I do not know what I am saying. Has the doctor seen her ? Is there any hope ? My God ! I cannot bear to look at her ! She is more like a corpse than a living being ! Quick, quick, Alicia ! Tell me, quickly ! Does the doctor think she will live ?”

“Yes,” said Alicia, “the doctor thinks there is great hope, and that, with unceasing care, there is little doubt she will recover. Now, do calm yourself, Devereux ; why should you be so agitated ? I declare you are trembling in every limb.”

“Am I ?” said Devereux, trying to smile and compose himself ; “I feel weaker than a woman, just now. But where is poor Lionel ?”

“You may well say ‘poor Lionel,’” replied Alicia ; “I never saw a human being in such a state of anguish, for he evidently blames himself for what has happened ! While the doctor was with Aunt, and before he pronounced his opinion, it would have melted the hardest heart to watch

Lionel's face ! He looked the picture of despair ! I am sure, poor fellow, that look will haunt me to my dying day ! I cannot bear to think of it, now !” And the soft-hearted Alicia burst into tears. “ Why don't you go to poor Lionel and comfort him ?” she continued, “ I am sure I should, if I were only sure that my motives would not be misunderstood !”

“ Make yourself easy, Alicia,” said Devereux, much concerned ; “ I shall go instantly.”

He hastened accordingly to his brother's apartment ; but he paused at the door, for unusual sounds struck his ear. The groans and sobs of a strong man are always painful to the listener ; but they are doubly so, when uttered by a beloved relative. Devereux shuddered, as, opening the door, he softly entered the room. Lionel had cast himself on the floor, with his face to the ground. His forehead rested on his hands, and his shoulders heaved convulsively.

“ Oh ! mother ! mother !” he sobbed, “ I have known thee too late ! And now I am to lose thee ! Oh ! mother ! mother ! do not die ! O God, do not let her die ! Cruel cruel son that I

have been ! Wretch that I am ! I have killed my mother !" And then writhing on the floor, unconscious of Devereux's presence, he wept like a child.

Devereux waited a few minutes till the paroxysm had somewhat subsided, and then, stooping down, softly tried to raise him from the ground, saying, "Lionel ! dear Lionel, for Heaven's sake, calm yourself ! you have no cause to grieve in this way ! There is every reason to hope for our mother's recovery ! Dear Lionel, get up from the ground !"

Lionel, who seemed thoroughly weakened by his paroxysm of grief and passion, suffered himself to be raised by his brother, and sat down mechanically on a chair, while Devereux talked and did his best to console him.

"You are very kind, brother," at last he replied, "and I feel your kindness the more, from knowing your strong attachment to my mother. Yes, I am sure that, disguise it as you will, the sight of me must be painful to you ! I am a wretch, Devereux ; and if my mother do not recover, I shall never henceforth know one moment's happiness ! You are kind

to me, Devereux," he continued, taking his brother's hand in his ; " God bless you for it ! "

" Dear Lionel," replied his brother, " it almost unmans me to hear you ! You take too strong a view of the circumstances ! You must not give way so. "

" Am I giving way now ? " exclaimed Lionel with a faint, but most melancholy smile playing round his lips—a sickly smile, and very painful to behold. " I am quite composed," he continued, " look at me, Devereux, and see that I am so ! And now for patience ! A few days will determine if it is to be life or death ; and, during that time, let none envy me ! Leave me, Devereux ! Leave me, now ! I am beginning to feel bitterly unhappy ! It is better you should go ! "

Devereux sighed, and got up to leave the apartment ; but he turned to look at Lionel, ere he closed the door. His lips were compressed, and his brow was knit ; for the evil spirit was again upon him.

Mrs. Charteris continued in much the same state during the remainder of the day. Dr. Wiseman paid her another visit in the evening,

and again expressed his conviction that care and attention would yet save her. Madame was unremitting in her attentions, and sat up with her all night. Towards midnight the sufferer appeared to revive ; she opened her eyes and stared wildly around her, and then, notwithstanding all Madame's remonstrances, she began to talk ; for her extreme weakness and loss of blood had rendered her delirious. After a little, to Madame's great relief, she stopped and closed her eyes for some minutes ; so the good Frenchwoman, thinking she had fallen asleep, knelt down by the bed-side and commenced her devotions, offering up, we may be sure, many earnest supplications for the invalid. Lionel, meanwhile, had not gone to bed. The whole house was quiet, and he alone remained out of bed. He felt it was impossible to sleep, so great was his anxiety about his mother. His agitation had by this time subsided, for his excitement had worn itself out. In its place, there remained a dull, heavy sensation of uneasiness, a throbbing of the temples, a

confusion of the mind, a sort of want of ability to realize what had occurred.

It might be about one o'clock, and for two hours Lionel had sat on a chair in his room, absorbed in gloomy thought, and yet it is misnaming it to call it thought, so dull, heavy, and confused was the course of his vague ideas. The poor fellow was thoroughly worn out. At last it occurred to him, that the doctor had said that a few minutes' inattention might be fatal to the sufferer. Lionel shuddered! Madame might be sleeping—his mother might want something, and there might be no one near to help her! He rose suddenly and went to his mother's apartments. He passed through the dressing-room,—the door of the bed-room—was ajar it had been left so for coolness. He heard a faint murmur, and looked in. Madame was kneeling by the bed-side; she had on a loose white dressing-gown, and, with her pale face and large black eyes turned up to heaven, and the beads of her rosary in her hand, looked so spiritual and nun-like that Lionel scarcely recognized her. She was so

absorbed in her devotions that she did not observe him, and he had time to remark that she was in tears, and that every now and then his mother's name was pronounced. He felt touched and gratified, and the moisture rose in his own eyes, as he leant against the doorway. His mother, who had been lying motionless and with her eyes closed, as though quite unconscious of all that was passing, suddenly appeared to wake from her stupor, and, fixing her eyes upon Lionel, began to talk wildly. His appearance seemed to have suggested the current of her ideas, and yet it was evident she had not recognized him. At first her ravings were indistinct, and only a few words could be understood. She seemed to be talking of her family, for the names of each of them recurred from time to time. At last she spoke louder and more clearly, while her sentences came with great rapidity. Madame rose, and seeing Lionel for the first time, blushed at the idea of her devotions having been observed. But that feeling quickly gave way to terror and alarm, at the excitement of the patient. She clasped her

hands and looked at Lionel in agony, as much as to say—

“What can we do? This is death to her!”

“I had a son once, his name was Lionel,” exclaimed the delirious woman; “Oh, how I loved him! He was my first-born! I loved Devereux, and I loved my daughter Eva, but I loved none like Lionel! He was such a fair child—and so innocent! He stretched his little arms up from the cradle to come to me, because he loved me! He loved his mother then—and, oh, it was so sweet! He had sunny curls down his snowy neck! He was like a little angel! But he is gone—gone—gone! Who has taken him away? Who has robbed me of my first-born? Has God taken him? For he is no longer with me!”

And poor Mrs. Charteris wrung her hands in the extremity of her sorrow. She paused an instant, and then looking at Lionel, who, in his agitation, had stepped forward, she suddenly appeared to recognize him, and shrieking wildly, exclaimed,

“Alas, alas! He lives still! But some one has robbed me of his heart! I am bereft—I am bereft, indeed!”

The poor lady then hid her face in her hands and wept bitterly. Madame was terrified, but she did not lose her presence of mind, though she whispered to Lionel, “She will die! she will die! God help me!” Then springing on the bed behind her, she supported her in her arms, and swaying her body backwards and forwards, as a nurse would do to a sick child, she began to sing. Lionel could not tell at first whether it was a lullaby or a hymn, the air was so sweetly monotonous, till the refrain came in,—“Ave Maria, sweet Mother, hear!” It soon had the desired effect, for the sufferer closed her eyes and slept. Madame continued singing for some time longer, while Lionel sat by the bed-side watching. At last she ventured to stop, and whispered, “You had better go to bed now, Mr. Charteris, and in your prayers thank God that this paroxysm has passed off without apparent injury to your mother.”

It was late next morning before Madame

unfastened the door of the dressing-room. She had remained for hours upon the bed supporting Mrs. Charteris, and it was only great fatigue that compelled her to relinquish her post. She then laid the sufferer back very gently upon the pillow, and fortunately succeeded in disengaging herself without awakening her. No sooner was she free than she bolted the door of the external apartment, apprehensive lest her charge should be again disturbed. It was nearly ten o'clock when Mrs. Charteris awoke, and, observing her nurse, called faintly to her. Madame smiled, and after unbolting the door, came to her, and put her finger to her lips.

"I must speak," said Mrs. Charteris, in a whisper; "I want to tell you something, for I have felt so happy. I dreamt I was crying bitterly, when suddenly Lionel appeared to me, not as he is now, but as he was when a child,—a bright and happy child. He came and kissed my tears away, and then the angels sung,—for I was in Paradise!"

"You must not speak; indeed you must not," replied Madame, delighted to perceive

that her delirium had passed away ; “ speaking will do you great harm, but if you like I shall sing to you again the same song you heard before.”

“ Then it was you that were singing !” exclaimed Mrs. Charteris in surprise ; “ And Lionel — where is he ?”

“ He was here, and will come back again,” replied Madame.

“ Oh, happiness !” said Mrs. Charteris ; “ bring him again, and sing to me.”

“ When you are better he will come again,” said Madame, who was getting uneasy, lest she should become too excited.

Lionel was by this time in the ante-room ; he had been watching on the stairs for the door opening, and as soon as it was unbolted he had entered. His ears were sharpened by anxiety, and he had heard every word his mother said. Madame began to sing, and Mrs. Charteris closed her eyes, then Lionel came in softly, and sitting down by her bedside, put his hand in hers. She could not have recognized him, for she never opened her eyes ; but, as Madame continued her sweet

song, she grasped his hand tightly, and the tears ran down her cheeks. Lionel remained with her about half an hour, and only slipped away when he heard the doctor come.

“What!” exclaimed Dr. Wiseman in a whisper, as he entered the sick room, and beheld traces of tears on his patient’s cheeks, “there has been mischief doing! Who has been here?”

“Only Mr. Charteris and myself, this morning,” replied Madame.

“I have no objection to yourself,” whispered the doctor; “but I henceforth strictly forbid Mr. Charteris, or any one else not absolutely required, to enter the sick-room. They little know the mischief they may do by such idle visits.”

CHAPTER XI.

“Give me, to live and die
A spotless maid, without the marriage tie.”

DRYDEN.

THE day after Mrs. Charteris was taken ill, Kate wrote the following letter to her mother :—

“MY DEAREST MOTHER,

“It was not in my power to write to you yesterday as I had intended, owing to the sudden illness of Mrs. Charteris, who has burst a blood-vessel, and is now dangerously ill. I

have been very busy ever since taking care of the children and amusing them all day, for their governess is entirely engrossed in the sick chamber. Words cannot tell how I have been longing to write to you! I have so much to say to you, that I know not where to begin! Oh! that you were here, that I might talk to you! Mother, you thought it very strange and very foolish in me, to wish to come here; but my destiny led me, I am now more than ever convinced, whether for good or evil remains to be seen!

“The late Mr. Charteris, the husband of the present possessor of the hall, was —— guess, mother!—was my father’s brother! The proud and stately Mrs. Charteris is your sister-in-law! It is true, mother, quite true. Are not the ways of God wonderful in leading me here? You recollect I told you how I had been obliged to confess every thing to Mrs. Charteris, and she had seemed strangely affected. She then, as you must remember, forbade me to

talk of myself, or my circumstances, to any one in the establishment ; and finished by saying that at the end of a month, during which I should remain here, she would, if I gave her satisfaction, do something for me. Little did I then surmise her motives. However, the day before yesterday it was all made clear to me. The day before yesterday Mrs. Charteris' youngest son, Mr. Devereux Charteris, came up to me while I was walking with the children, and sent them on before us, looking so strange and excited, that I did not know what to make of it. Then he began to talk, but in such an extraordinary manner, that I was quite frightened. He called me his *cousin*, and when I did not answer, upbraided me for treating unkindly my father's nephew. The truth was, he thought I knew all about it. At last, when he saw that I in reality did not, he took the trouble to explain himself, and tell me all about it. You may judge of my surprise and bewilderment. At first I determined

to go straight to Mrs. Charteris, and say to her, that having found out my relationship to her family, I could not remain a moment longer under her roof in my present situation. But Mr. Devereux begged and entreated that I would do nothing hastily, or I should get him into a sad scrape with his mother. So ever since, I have been turning and revolving all that has passed in my mind, and wondering what Mrs. Charteris means to do for me, and why she lets me remain as I am. For I think most people would either have sent me home, or taken me out of my present situation. However, I suppose I must remain quiet for the present, as poor Mrs. Charteris is so ill, and I am absolutely required for the children, in their governess's absence. I feel so excited and unsettled that I scarcely know what to do with myself."

The rest of Kate's letter being taken up with affectionate messages to her family, we shall leave it to the imagination of the reader.

Mrs. Charteris, if she was little better, at least got no worse during the first two or three days after the commencement of her illness. On the third evening, Alicia and Miss Jones proposed to sit up with her, and allow Madame to get to bed. The latter had had no rest hitherto, except a few hours during each day, when she lay down, without undressing, that she might be ready at a moment's notice to get up and attend to the patient. Madame, however, declined their offer, and said she was not in the least tired, though her pale haggard cheeks, and the unnatural brilliancy of her blood-shot eyes belied her assertion.

"I dare say at this moment," said Alicia, "that you are not tired, dear Madame, for your spirit is stronger than your body, and keeps you up. But you will suffer for this by and by, and give way all at once. Do, dear Madame, allow Johnny and me to take our turn."

"Yes," said Johnny, "she does not know

what a good Bucephalus I make. Oh! what did I say? Esculapius I mean, giving black draughts and attending on sick people! I have had a vast deal of practice in Parnassus. No mother ever had more uneasiness, or more caudling with physic, than I have had with Dicky."

Madame laughed, but she was so thoroughly weakened and unnerved by watching and anxiety, that laughter was more than she could bear. To Alicia's surprise and Johnny's delight she seemed amused a great deal longer than the occasion merited, till at last her laughing changed into sobbing, and she burst into a flood of hysterical tears.

"Now, dear Madame," said Alicia, as soon as she became a little composed, "you are totally unfit to attend on my aunt to-night, and I insist upon your going to bed. I shall take all the responsibility on myself, for I can be steady enough when the occasion requires. Johnny shall sit up, too, and re-

main in the ante-room, within call, in case I want any thing."

"Will you promise me, then," said Madame, who began to feel that Alicia was right with regard to her exhaustion and weakness, "will you promise me to rouse me if Mrs Charteris require anything that you cannot do for her, or if she get worse?"

"Certainly," replied Alicia; "in such a case I should be too glad to have your assistance."

Satisfied by this assurance, Madame went to bed, and Alicia and Miss Jones installed themselves guardians of the sick room for the night. Just as they had made themselves comfortable, Lionel tapped at the door, to inquire for his mother, and Alicia answered.

"What! are you here," he exclaimed; "and it's so late! Where is Madame?"

"Gone to bed," said Alicia.

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Lionel; "what is to become of my mother?"

“ Johnny and I are to sit up with her,” replied Alicia ; and then, observing her cousin’s blank look of disappointment and anxiety, she continued, the tears filling her eyes,—

“ I am not quite such a useless being as you imagine, Lionel ; I *can* be patient and enduring, and I *can* exert myself when the occasion requires it. Your dear mother will be quite safe under my watchful care, for I am not always the silly, giddy girl for which you take me.”

“ Forgive me, Alicia,” said Lionel ; “ your fancy has outstripped the reality ; and I know that there is a strong fund of good sense and good feeling in your character, although, sometimes, you disguise yourself so, that it is difficult to find you out.”

“ Well, Lionel,” rejoined Alicia, haughtily, afraid lest she had betrayed too much concern about her cousin’s approbation ; “ I must let you know that it is quite immaterial to me what you think of me. Whether you con-

si!er me a giddy, heartless flirt, or a woman of sense and feeling, it will be all one, thank God! a hundred years hence. So now, good night, it is time for you to go away, and leave us undisturbed."

"Good night, Alicia,—good night, Johnny," said Lionel, sorrowfully; and walking away gently closed the door behind him. "That girl is quite changed," said he to himself; "she almost looks as if she disliked me!"

In a few days more Mrs. Charteris perceptibly began to mend; Dr. Wiseman expressed himself satisfied with her progress, and no longer forbade her friends to come in and talk to her. Alicia and Miss Jones brought their work regularly every forenoon to her bedside, while her sons often came and read aloud. Devereux always chose something amusing from the light literature of the day; but Lionel, who had a beautiful voice, and read with exquisite taste, gave them a higher treat, reading in general from Milton, Spencer,

Pope, or the other old poets, in whose works he delighted. Then Alicia would listen as though entranced, and laying down her work, fix her eyes upon the countenance of the reader. If, by any chance, Lionel looked up suddenly, and caught her eye, she was always ready with some flippant observation, to do away with the impression that she had been an admiring listener. Then Lionel would close the book in disgust and rise as though to leave the room; Alicia, however, could always recal him, if she asked him in tones of entreaty, and as if she were in earnest.

It one day happened, that Alicia was alone with Mrs. Charteris, Miss Jones had gone to call on Miss Mitten, Madame was with the children, and the gentlemen had gone for a day's shooting; so there was no danger of interruption in their *tête-à-tête*.

"Alicia, my love, are you alone?" said Mrs. Charteris.

"Yes, aunt," replied Alicia, moving towards

the bed, for she had thought her aunt was asleep.

"Sit down by me, and chat to me," said the old lady. "Well, is that silly creature Johnny actually gone to see Miss Mitten? I suppose Dioclesian will walk home with her!"

"Most likely," replied Alicia, laughing; "is not Johnny an extraordinary creature? What with her gay dress, her pretty ringlets, her sprightliness, and her flippant ways, any one would suppose she was much younger than she really is. I am sure, if it were not for her shrivelled brown skin, I should take her for only five and thirty."

"She might pass for thirty, very well," rejoined Mrs. Charteris; "her air, figure, and manners are so remarkably youthful. And yet she is actually a year and a half older than I am. But she is one of those who never change, either in person or in mind. She was just the same when we were at school together; and all the world set her down for a great heiress."

"Then she could not have felt acutely her loss of fortune," remarked Alicia. "Did she appear at all in low spirits when she first went out as governess?"

"Not in the least," said the old lady; "and I have no doubt that if she live to be seventy, she will continue as giddy as any school girl. What a contrast between her and myself! Here am I, an old woman as far as suffering and experience of the world go! Yet, time, which changes all things, has changed me less than the experience of the last few months."

"How so, aunt? Explain yourself!" said Alicia.

"I am changed," replied Mrs. Charteris, with a sigh, "in regard to my views for my children. I once thought it necessary to interfere with them, to manage them, to govern them absolutely, and thus I made them and myself miserable. It was a great mistake, but my eyes are opened now, and I see my error."

"Dear aunt," said Alicia, who dreaded the

subject, "you are too severe upon yourself—it is not good for you to talk in this way; let us converse upon something else."

"Do not be afraid, Alicia," replied her aunt; "I am perfectly calm, and I wish to talk about it; because my change of views, among other things, regards a little plan I had once formed for you and Lionel, which is all passed now."

Alicia hung down her head, and resumed her work, but did not reply.

"I see clearly that you are quite averse to the match," continued her aunt, "and that you and your cousin do not get on at all. As to Lionel, from what he said to me the day before your arrival, I was well convinced that he had no thoughts of engaging himself, far less of marrying, at present, so that has made me the more glad to see your indifference to him."

Alicia still did not speak, but the big tears dropped fast upon her work, and nearly blinded

her. Mrs. Charteris did not observe this, and went on,—“Do not be annoyed with me, Alicia, if I venture to prophesy, that, when you do marry, you will be far happier, and more fortunate, than if you had wedded Lionel; for I question much if his strange temper would have suited yours. Dear Devereux! He deserves a good wife! and I fervently pray he may get one!”

“And I too join in the prayer,” exclaimed Alicia, in such a gay and animated tone as made her aunt start, and wonder if she had been wrong in her surmises.

“You are gay this morning, Alicia!” said she, half turning round in bed to look at her.

“Gay, am I?” replied Alicia, in a forced tone;—“No, far from it; I am very, very miserable!” and, covering her face with her hands, she began to sob violently.

“Alicia, for heaven’s sake, what is the matter?” exclaimed her aunt.

“Ah! I am mad! worse than mad, to give

way so before you," cried Alicia. "Excuse me, Aunt, I am ill and nervous; let me go and send Madame in my place."

Alicia darted out of the room, and ran to Madame's apartments.

"Oh, Madame!" she exclaimed, "what have I done! I have frightened Mrs. Charteris by taking a fit of crying! Do, for my sake, leave the children directly, and go to her!"

"And I dare say you have put her in hysterics," said Madame, hastily rushing out of the room, "I wonder you could be so inconsiderate."

Mrs. Charteris was somewhat agitated when Madame arrived, but she soon succeeded in calming her, and apologized for Alicia's strange behaviour, on the score of indisposition.

After this Alicia's manner to Lionel became daily more and more capricious; by turns soft, gentle, and sympathizing, or lively, heartless, and inconsiderate. Some days, quite

engrossed with her occupations, she appeared scarcely to know when Lionel entered the room ; at other times her eyes brightened, and her cheeks flushed, if he only approached : but then if he looked too happy, she immediately brought him down a few degrees, by saying something abominably cutting and impertinent. Devereux was not so much in the sick-room as the other members of the family ; but whenever he made his appearance, after allowing him a few minutes for a chat with his mother, Alicia was sure to take possession of him. Then the two would go to the window together, or to some other quiet corner of the room, and keep up a whispered conversation, very disagreeable to Lionel, but a source of great pleasure to his mother, who had no doubt they were lovers. During these *tête-à-têtes* they generally talked about Kate, for it was Devereux's favourite subject of conversation.

"Do you know," said he to Alicia, one day, "that Kate's month will be out the end

of next week, and then she talks of going home? Do you not think it would be best to speak to her about it? Of course she must not leave us till my mother arranges something for her."

"My aunt is far too weak to be troubled on the subject at present," replied Alicia. "I suppose the best thing I can do is to ask Kate to remain till Mrs. Charteris gets quite well again;—besides, you know, she is so useful about the children that Madame never scruples to leave them in her charge, when she wants to do anything for your mother."

"All very true," said Devereux, "and that is another reason for speaking to Kate immediately, before she makes different arrangements."

Alicia, in consequence of this conversation, went directly to seek Kate, and had but little difficulty in inducing her to prolong her sojourn, till Mrs. Charteris should be quite re-established. Many days did not elapse

before she began to have misgivings as to the wisdom of her arrangement.

“Where is Devereux?” said her aunt to her one day; “I do not see nearly so much of him as I did at first. And I particularly remark, that he never, by any chance, stays in the room if Madame is sitting here. Do you think he dislikes her?”

“No, I should think,” said Alicia; “I believe it would be impossible for any human being to dislike Madame, she is so thoroughly good; besides, he must feel a lively debt of gratitude to her, for her unceasing care of you when you were so ill. She spared herself no trouble, no fatigue—and acted like a true sister of charity.”

“That is most true,” said Mrs. Charteris; “and as Devereux is anything but ungrateful, I suppose I must retract my suspicion. But what, then, is the reason that the moment she sits down with us he leaves the room; and if, on coming in, he finds her already

here, he appears as though he could not rest till he contrive some excuse for making his escape?"

"It is very odd," replied Alicia, laughing; "and depend upon it I shall take the first opportunity to discover the reason."

She was soon enabled to put her resolution in execution; for Devereux came into the room shortly after, and proposed reading aloud a humorous Irish tale. The ladies were delighted, and he commenced. Mrs. Charteris, who was not often moved to laughter, at least smiled very frequently, and Alicia gave way to unrestrained merriment; for Devereux could be exceedingly droll, and imitated the Irish accent to the life. They were in the very midst of this, when the door opened and Madame entered. Alicia and her aunt could not refrain from looking at each other, and making a sign of intelligence.

"I am afraid you are getting tired, mother,"

said Devereux, suddenly stopping short ; " it is not good for you to laugh so much."

" Laughing !" exclaimed Madame, with such a look of horror, as highly amused both the young people, " the very worst thing she could do ! Who has been so indiscreet as to make her laugh ?"

" No one !" replied Alicia ; " Devereux certainly has been reading a most amusing tale, and *I* have been laughing a great deal ; but I do not think Aunt has laughed once, though I confess she has smiled very often ; for I have been watching her."

" Well, I must not run the risk of exciting her too much, or too long," said Devereux, " so now that Madame has come, I shall be off !"

" Do not be in a hurry, my son," said Mrs. Charteris ; " cannot you sit down a little and chat, if you do not read ?"

" I shall return by and bye," said Devereux, looking fidgetty ; " but I have something I

ought to do at this hour. Good bye, dearest mother,—*au revoir*.”

Mrs. Charteris and Alicia nodded to each other, as Devereux left the room ; and the young lady presently got up and followed him.

“ Alicia ! Alicia ! ” cried her aunt, “ pray don’t ! I do not like this espionage at all ! ”

But Alicia was already out of hearing. She ran along the lobby, and encountered Johnny, who was singing,—

“ Poppies like these I know are rare,
And of such nightingale’s songs beware ! ”

“ Well, I have been singing these words to Kate, as she went out with the children, and I hope the admonition will do her good ! ” said she ; “ they turned down the elm avenue, and now I see Devereux posting after them,” she continued, pointing to the window ; “ I hope Devereux may not prove a beguiling serpent ! Poor boy ! what if he should fall in love ! or

Kate lose her heart! Far from *comme il faut*! Propriety, you know, propriety should be considered! Shall I go and matronize them, Alicia? Spinster though I be, in my maternal character I may prove useful to the long-legged darling!"

"So this is the meaning of it all!" said Alicia, to herself; "it is uncommonly provoking! And Aunt will be so annoyed! I wish I had not told Kate to stay!"

And then turning to Johnny, she continued, "Do they walk together every day?"

"I am sure I cannot exactly say," replied she, "whether it is *every* day or not! You know Devereux is so remarkably philoprogenitive! So fond of children! And he has got amazingly attached to Eva and Evan lately!"

"So it would appear!" said Alicia, turning away, and returning to the sick-room.

"Ha! Humph!" said Johnny, as soon as she was out of hearing; "Jealous, is she?"

Poor thing! Green and yellow! Dicky's livery! Must warn Devereux not to be unkind to poor Alicia! Will break her heart, he will! And shoot himself afterwards! And then bring poor Johnny's hairs with sorrow to the grave!"

And here Miss Jones began to weep, for the fountain of her tears always flowed easily.

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